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KHARTOUM

international conference for solidarity with

the peoples of PORTUGUESE COLONIES & SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Editorial Notes:

Eduardo Mondlane

IT WAS WITH PROFOUND shock and indignation that we learnt of the untimely death of Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, the victim of a cowardly assassination plot directed from far away from Tanzania where he was living at the time. Eduardo Mondlane will always remain one of the heroes of African liberation. His name will always be linked closely with that of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, of which he was the first President and remained so to the end having been re-elected at the recent Conference of FRELIMO held in liberated Northern Mozambique and reported in our last issue.

Coming from a large and poor peasant family it was only through sheer grit, ability and sacrifice that the late Dr. Mondlane succeeded in achieving a brilliant academic career. After his schooling in Mozambique he studied in Lisbon, the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, and finally in the United States where he was awarded his Doctorate of Philosophy.

Dr. Mondlane taught at American universities for several years and married there before deciding to return to Africa and devote his life to the emancipation of his country and his people.

It was under his leadership that FRELIMO undertook the stern and exacting path of armed struggle which has already resulted in the liberation of several provinces of Mozambique and their administration by the people's forces. It was also under his guidance that FRELIMO established strong and enduring bonds of comradeship and common struggle

with the liberation movement of the neighbouring Republic of South Africa — the African National Congress.

One of Eduardo Mondlane's last public appearances was at the historic Khartoum Conference, reported elsewhere in this issue, where he played a prominent part. From there he proceeded to Cairo where once again he played a leading role at the Conference in support of the fraternal Arab Peoples which took place from 25—28 January. With Mrs. Bandanaraike of Ceylon he was co-chairman of the important Commission on Human Rights.

Dr. Mondlane gave his last press interview during this Conference to *The Egyptian Gazette* (25 January 1969). In this interview he paid tribute to the influence upon him and his thinking of such men as Mandela and Sisulu during his period as a student in Johannesburg.

Eduardo Mondlane's death is a heavy blow, not only to the people of his own country but also to the entire national liberation movement. But his spirit lives on to inspire the brave patriots of Southern Africa to fight on still harder to win the goals for which he gave his life, to avenge his murder and bring to justice the imperialist assassins who were responsible, to build the free Mozambique for which he lived and died.

Zionist Menace

Zionist aggression against the neighbouring Arab countries, and Israel's inhuman treatment of the Arab population of Palestine, millions of whom have been driven from their homes, continue to occupy a focal point of world anxiety. Behind Israel with her arrogant contempt for the Arab peoples and her dream of establishing a religious Jewish state from the Nile to the Euphrates, stands the world's most powerful and aggressive imperialist state, the U.S.A. Staunchly backing the Arab countries in their demands for the withdrawal of the invading Israeli troops and self-determination for the Palestinian people is the Socialist Soviet Union.

Thus, a prolongation and intensification of the Middle East crisis must lead to a grave danger that the two most powerful nuclear and military states will confront one another. No sane person could wish such an outcome, for reasons which are all too clear.

Yet, that is precisely what the leaders of Israel, aided and abetted by the West, are continuing to do. They refuse to withdraw to the borders they occupied before the aggression of June 1967, as demanded by the Security Council. They refuse to allow the return of the Arab refugees whom the expelled from Israel and from the occupied territories. They continuously conduct fresh aggressions against their neighbouring states.

Their pretext for so doing is that these states are allowing their territory to be used as bases for the operations of the guerrillas of the Palestinian Arab liberation movements. But who could deny the right of people who have been expelled from their motherland by force to return by all means including armed struggle? Or the duty of the fraternal Arab States to give them all assistance in their power?

Israel must quit the territories she has illegally annexed by her acts of aggression. She must readmit the Arab peoples she has inhumanly driven from their ancestral homelands. That is the plain message of the recent Cairo Conference in support of the Arab peoples.

Bantustan Election

The second general elections for the Transkei Legislative Council were held in November last year. The results were a surprise to most observers. The Transkei National Independence Party led by Chief Kaiser Matanzima won 28 of the 45 elected seats in the Council. This together with 57 ex-officio chiefs who support the TNIP gave Matanzima 85 of the 109 members of the Legislative Council. The Opposition Democratic Party led by Mr. K. M. Guzana obtained 14 of the elected seats and there were three independent members. On the face of it Matanzima who has won notoriety as an Apartheid stooge had won a smashing victory.

However, the elections were held under the shadow of proclamation 400 which maintains the State of Emergency in the Transkei and has done since 1960. No meetings can be held in the Transkei without the permission of the Chiefs who are all government appointed and paid. All progressive movements or individuals who genuinely oppose the Apartheid regime are illegal and their members are subjected to imprisonment and other form of repression.

The estimated number of voters in the Transkei is 907,778. Of these 253,612 voted for the Transkei National Independence Party. Almost twice that number, namely, 445,383 voted for the Democratic Party and for other anti-government candidates. A total of 698,995 people cast their votes. This shows that Matanzima's group which won a majority of the elected seats did so on a minority of the voters. This, however, still does not explain how approximately a quarter-of-a-million votes were cast for what is known to be in essence a ruthless policy of suppression and exploitation of the African people.

All the numerous schemes of local government designed by White governments for Africans in South Africa have been designed to divert attention from the central issue of national political power. Whether it is local councils, general councils, Native Conferences or Native Representative Councils or Bantu Authorities — the white governments sought to keep Africans busy with some innocuous body

having no effective legislative, administrative or financial powers. Each such scheme was in particular always designed to engage the energies of the intelligentsia in a futile time-consuming political game which robbed the real struggle of its potential leadership. Each scheme went with a judicious combination of government patronage for those willing to participate in it with ruthless suppression of those who opposed it in toto. Some 'opposition' within the scheme to give it some colour of democracy has been found useful by previous governments as well as by the present Fascist one.

The 'Bantustan' or 'homelands' policy is no exception. In fact coming as it did in the era of African independence throughout the continent everything has been done by the South African government to make the Bantustan concept as attractive as possible.

The Transkei legislative council has 109 members of whom 45 are elected and the balance are government appointed chiefs. The council elects a 'cabinet' consisting of a Chief Minister and five ministers. Cabinet membership carries with it a salary and a ministerial house. The South African government makes an annual grant of R 15 million towards the budget of the Transkei. Many cities and towns in the Republic have a far bigger municipal budget than the Transkei neverthless 15 million Rand is quite a lot of money. Many posts previously held by whites in the Transkei especially in education and the civil service are now held by Africans. Trading licences are being issued more freely to Africans as compared with previous practice. In the urban areas where Africans were not allowed to purchase land or own houses freehold, they are now able to do so in special zones. The much-hated Bantu Education syallabus which obtains in South Africa has been to some extent modified in the Transkei in line with African wishes.

By means of startling demagogic statements which suggest changes in the future Matanzima has given the impression that 'independence' similar to that enjoyed by other African countries is on the way under his leadership. He is also quick to point out that any type of 'independence' or change is better than anything Africans have had before.

An elite group capable of taking full personal advantage of possible immediate profits in the Transkei has emerged as allies to Matanzima. The candidates put forward by the Transkei National Independence Party were young, aggressive and well-educated. The cabinet itself consists of lawyers and university graduates. These people do not necessarily believe in the Apartheid ideology or practice but are out to exploit any advantages there may be to the full. Thus one of the aims of the Apartheid policy which is to produce an elite dependent on government patronage is emerging steadily but surely. A few gestures will be made in the direction of the masses but essentially it is the petit bourgeoisie that is benefiting from the present policies in the Transkei.

In contrast to the Matanzima Party the Democratic Party has no real alternative. Because this party is working essentially within the framework of the apartheid policy it can hardly go too far in its opposition. As far as the masses are concerned the Democratic Party desires to oust the Transkei National Independence Party so as to itself take office.

The African National Congress and its supporters are underground preparing for the revolutionary armed struggle somewhat aloof from the political games in the Legislative Council. Many people feel that a lead to the people from the ANC would greatly help to clarify the situation in the Transkei.

In the meantime the facts must be faced that years of government repression and propaganda coupled with superficial benefits to certain groups is having an effect not only in the Transkei but in the rest of the country as well. A veritable army of civil servants, teachers in Bantu schools and tribal colleges are springing up with a vested interest in the policy of seperate development or apartheid. As has happened in the past the contradictions of South African society always produce disillusionment with these experiments in the end. But the issue needs to be faced vigorously.

15 million oppressed people in our country are no longer prepared to put up with white supremacy in the political economic and social spheres. The people demand power at the national, provincial and local levels of government. The Transkei experiment is a fraud however attractive its facade.

Reginald Bridgeman

Africa has cause to mourn the death on 11 December 1968 (after our last issue had gone to press) of Reginald Bridgeman of Britain who played an important part for many years in the Labour movement and particularly in the fight against colonialism.

Looking at his birth and his career it seemed unlikely that the late Mr. Bridgeman would have made the contribution which he did. Of an aristocratic family he went to school at Harrow and served for many years in the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service.

But Reginald Bridgeman had a mind of his own. As a diplomat especially in the East he came to see the havoc that British imperialism had wrought upon the lives of the colonial peoples and turned more and more towards socialism.

On his retirement from Government service in 1923 he joined the Labour Party. He played a prominent part in the great Conference held in 1927 in Brussels which founded the League against Imperialism. (This Conference was attended on behalf of the African National Congress by its then President J. D. Gumede, who subsequently travelled from Brussels to the Soviet Union, one of the first Africans from South Africa to do so).

Reginald Bridgeman became International Secretary of the League Against Imperialism in 1927 and served as British Secretary of the movement from 1933 to 1937. Around him in this movement, writes R. Page Arnot (in the *Morning Star*, London) 'where veteran militant trade unionists like Alexander Gossip, A. J. Cook, Tom Mann, Harry Pollitt and Aitken Fergusson, together with M.P.'s, like James Maxton, David Kirkwood, S. O. Davies and Fenner Brockway'.

Perhaps the best tribute to the work of the late Reginald Bridgeman is that so many of the goals he set himself and his movement (now the Movement for Colonial Freedom) have, with the winning of political independence of the greater part of Africa and Asia, been won. It is true that

independence was won by the struggle of the people themselves. But their fight was greatly aided by the work of men like Reginald Bridgeman.

AN APOLOGY

In our last issue we promised to publish in this one an article on the student movement in South Africa. Unfortunately circumstances have made it necessary for us to hold this article over. We apologise.

Khartoum

A Report of the International Conference in Support of the Peoples of the Portuguese Colonies and Southern Africa: Khartoum, 18–20 January 1969.

' A STATE OF WAR exists over a large area of the African continent.' These words from the Declaration of Khartoum sum up the essence of the conclusions and the message of the most notable international gathering yet held to focus world attention on the critical problem of the unliberated areas of Africa – critical not only to the peoples concerned but also to the future of all Africa and of world peace.

That the conference was held on African soil, in Khartoum, capital of the Sudan, was in itself a most important factor in determining the nature and temper of the meeting. Convened under the auspices of a preparatory committee established jointly by the World Council of Peace (based in Helsinki, Finnland) and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (based in Cairo), the Conference was widely representative. From more than fifty countries about two hundred delegates came to this historic city where the Blue Nile and the White Nile converge. They came from Europe – both the socialist and the capitalist countries; from Asia – the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam were represented, as were India, Ceylon and a number of other Asian countries. Representatives were present from North (U.S. and Canada) and South America, as well as the Tricontinental from Cuba. Most North African countries had delegates at the Conference, as did the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The powerful delegation from the Sudan was headed by the Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Ali Abdel Rahman.

The delegation from India was headed by R. K. Khadilkar, Deputy Speaker of Indian Parliament; that of the

United Arab Republic by Khaled Moheiddin; that of the U.S.S.R. by Jafar Jafaroff; that of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by Nguyen Xuan; that of the German Democratic Republic by Dr. Hartmut Schilling; that of Bulgaria by Spas Georgiev; that of Czechoslovakia by Vladimir Simek; that of Hungary by Karasz Gyozo; that of Poland by Prokopczuk Jarzy; that of Rumania by Costica Alecu; that of Yugoslavia by Dimitrije Bubic; that of the Korean Peoples Democratic Republic by Hwang Nai Ik; and that of Mongolia by Khorlo Purev.

Among other important personalities attending were Youssef El Sebai, the Secretary General of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, who headed the Preparatory Committee for the Conference; Isabelle Blume, the President, and Romesh Chandra, the General Secretary of the World Council of Peace; Domingo Amuchastegui, from the Executive Secretariat of Tri-Continental in Havana; Andrew Faulds, of the British anti-apartheid movement; John Gollan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain; and Mrs. Shirley Graham Du Bois, from the United States, widow of the famed Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois.

After a welcoming speech by President Ismail El Azhary, Chairman of the Sudanese Sovereignty Council, messages of support were read from President Nasser of the U.A.R., Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia, President Kwame Nkrumah, and others.

The Chairman of the International Preparatory Committee for the Conference, Youssef El Sebai, welcomed the delegates and detailed the objects and the extensive work of his committee.

A large number of excellent papers and speeches were presented to the Conference by the various delegations. They provided a wealth of statistical, historical and other information all of which helped the Conference to understand better both the nature of the struggle to complete the emancipation of Africa from colonialism and white domination, and the import of this struggle for the rest of the world.

Not unnaturally, the pace was set and much of the attention focussed on the representatives of the people most directly concerned, the national liberation movements of Southern Africa and the the Portuguese African Colonies. These were (in alphabetical order):

1. *African National Congress* of South Africa (ANC) whose delegation was headed on behalf of Acting President Oliver Tambo by Robert Resha;
2. *Front for the Liberation of Mozambique* (FRELIMO). Their delegation was headed by President Eduardo Mondlane, whose tragic assassination soon afterwards has been a heavy blow to Africa;
3. *Movement for the Liberation of Angola* (MPLA) headed by the militant fighter against Portuguese colonialism, Augustino Neto;
4. *Party of African Independence of Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC):* delegation led by the famed theoretician and revolutionary leader Amilcar Cabral;
5. *South West African People's Organisation* (SWAPO) of Namibia: head of delegation dynamic President Saul Nujomo;
6. *Zimbabwe African People's Union* (ZAPU) of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) the leader of whose delegation was Stephen Nkomo, Cairo representative of ZAPU (recently transferred to Algiers) and brother of ZAPU President Joshua Nkomo.

Undoubtedly, the contributions of the above-named delegations, fresh from the heart of the struggle against fascist Portuguese colonialism and the imperialist-backed white supremacy regimes were responsible for the remarkable tone of stern reality which pervaded the conference. Soberly and factually they recounted not only the outrageous crimes against humanity which characterise all six regimes — and which so often have occasioned angry votes of indignation and protest from the United Nations and innumerable other assemblies. They also spoke of the harsh and exacting fight against these regimes, which can only be overthrown in the course of armed struggle against them by the oppressed people of the countries concerned. They

exposed the reality of the involvement of international imperialism in the maintenance and continuance of these alien, anti-African administrations on African soil.

For a number of years the national liberation movements have been waging, with steadily growing success, wars of liberation against Portuguese colonialism. In each case, these movements now control substantial areas of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. They have set up their own administrations, which while concentrating on the exigencies of warfare also undertake educational, medical, economic and other governmental activities. They have drained, and continue to do so, an enormous toll of the manpower and resources of the shaky Portuguese fascist regime — which but for the powerful support of West Germany and its other NATO allies would long ago have either collapsed or been forced to quit its African colonies.

Further to the South, Zimbabwe, the Republic of South Africa and Namibia (the illegally annexed former German colony of 'South-West Africa', now occupied by the Republic) are in turmoil.

In Zimbabwe the joint military forces of the ZAPU-ANC alliance have since August 1967 inflicted heavy losses on the combined military forces of the illegal Smith regime and of the fascist Republic which it has had to call in to prop up its reign of terror. Here again, with the masses in both countries in a state of near-revolt which only the terroristic methods of the white supremacy regimes prevents from seething over into open revolution, only the open and concealed economic, military and political support of Britain and other imperialist powers, saves these racialist dictatorships, long condemned by history, from destruction at the hands of the African masses under whose tyranny and brutal exploitation they have so long suffered.

In Namibia, since July 1966 when the pro-imperialist majority on the bench of the International Court of Justice at the Hague passed a pro-South African verdict in the case filed, since 1960, by Ethiopia and Liberia, it became clear to the people and their organisation, SWAPO, that 'all the dreams and hopes of achieving independence by peaceful

means' and through action by the international community, had vanished. On 26 August of the same year an armed struggle was launched with has continued with ever-increasing determination up to the present day.

A NEW ERA OF THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

The international solidarity movement with the peoples of Southern Africa has a long history. Particularly since the establishment of the United Nations and the Bandung Conference which established the Afro-Asian solidarity movement, resolution after resolution has been passed in all sorts of world assemblies condemning apartheid, minority rule, Smith's illegal regime, and Portuguese colonialism, and calling on the governments concerned to bring their constitutions, laws and practices into conformity with the U. N. Charter and the principles of equality of human rights and dignity.

Decisions have been taken regarding sanctions and boycotts — decisions consistently ignored by the Western powers who are accomplices and partners in the colonial exploitation and super-profits which are the products of the slave regimes.

Racialist White South Africa was excluded from the Olympic Games, from the International Labour Organisation, from one field after another of international cultural exchanges.

At first high hopes were entertained by the oppressed peoples that — combined with their own peaceful mass struggles — such pressures would be effective in bringing about changes of policy leading to a broadening of democracy, and the achievement of their aspirations.

But the past decades have seen nothing but ever mounting oppression and repression, with tens of thousands of political prisoners cramming the jails, all legal protests by the Africans outlawed, and all international resolutions contemptuously, and with impunity, ignored by the white racists and their overseas imperialist partners.

It became clear to the liberation movements that nothing short of internal revolution, combined with the training and

launching into the field of guerrilla units of freedom fighters would ever succeed in dislodging the oppressors from their backs.

Does this mean that the solidarity of the millions of people all over the world — of our fellow Africans in the independent states, of the socialist, Asian and Latin American countries, of the working people in the imperialist countries — is no longer a factor of importance?

No, in many ways international solidarity is of greater importance than ever. But it does mean that the oppressed peoples have realised that their liberation depends on their own efforts in the first place, their own fight and their own sacrifices.

Therefore the *forms* of international support must be different from what they were before. No one believes any longer that the attitude of Britain, the U. S. A., West Germany and other backers of apartheid and colonialism in Africa can be changed by moral appeals to the authority of the U. N. Charter or the principles of human rights, or that they can be persuaded into taking effective measures to stop their support for Vorster, Smith and Caetano.

Just as we have to accept the inevitability of their support for fascism and Portuguese colonialism in Africa, we must accept too the duty of the rest of the world to counter this backing by rendering all out moral, political and material aid to the people's fight against the racist regimes.

A THREAT TO PEACE

Nor is this only a moral and principled duty of those peoples and governments which seek peace and oppose imperialism. It is in their own direct and urgent interest to counter the imperialist actions in Southern Africa. As pointed out in a notable paper 'Apartheid — the World must Act' presented by R. M. Resha on behalf of the African National Congress of South Africa:

> 'The clash between the African peoples of Southern Africa and the white racist regimes which oppress and exploit them cannot be regarded as a purely local conflict. It is one of fundamental *international* interest and concern, affecting directly and indirectly, all peoples everywhere. The aggressive

military axis of Pretoria, Salisbury and Lisbon constitutes *a serious and direct threat to world peace.'*

The fascist Republic of South Africa with its powerful military machine threatens the independence and peace of every African state. Not only has it illegally annexed Namibia and invaded Zimbabwe, it is extending its attempts at imperialist domination over neighbouring Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, as also Malawi with the connivance of Dr. Banda's administration, increasingly under the sway of Pretoria.

'It has illegally, and in defiance of the United Nations and international law, *annexed,* the former Mandated Territory of *Namibia* (South West Africa). It is forcibly *intervening in Zimbabwe* to sustain the illegal Smith regime in face of a popular revolution — this is an act of invasion of what is supposed to be a British colony. It is extending its attempts at economic, political and military domination from neighbouring *Lesotho, Swaziland* and *Botswana* northwards,, first to *Malawi,* but with the object of penetrating all independent African States. South Africa has made blatant threats against *Zambia* and *Tanzania,* and maintains a military attache in Malawi whose influence is evident in the brazen territorial claims of the Banda regime against these independent African countries. Fascist South Africa is as much a threat to the peace, security and independence of the Continent of Africa today, as was the Hitler regime to Europe thirty years ago.'

The analogy is a well founded one. Just as little as any country in the world could afford to ignore the menace of German imperialism in the thirties which eventually set almost the whole world ablaze in the flames of war, so no people anywhere can afford to ignore the menace of the Pretoria—Salisbury—Lisbon axis to the peace of Africa and the world today.

South Africa is arming to the teeth. Interesting data on recent South African military preparations was presented by the Soviet delegation which pointed out that military expenditure had increased from 129 million rands in 1962—1963 to 252.7 million rands in 1968—1969 thus totalling the huge sum of 1,485.7 million rands over the past seven years. Budget expenditures for 'armaments production' increased from 368,000 rands in 1960—1961 to 44,900,000 rands in 1966—1967.

The whole of Southern Africa is at one stage or another of armed conflict against the increasingly closely combined forces of the oppressors. It is a conflict in which, whether one likes it or not, practically the whole of the outside world is already directly or indirectly involved.

Thus the problem, clearly recognised perhaps for the first time in the speeches and decisions of the Khartoum Conference, extends far beyond the types of solidarity action hitherto undertaken at the United Nations or by anti-apartheid and similar movements abroad. But these actions have by no means been without their value and effect. 'On the contrary', as stated by the A. N. C. 'they have been of immense value, and we ..... would like here once again to express our profound appreciation to the tireless labours of the friends of our oppressed people, which have been a wonderful inspiration and encouragement in our hard struggle.

> 'Yet we must face the hard fact that after many years of such excellent solidarity work the vicious regimes which we confront have survived, even flourished; that our people are more oppressed and exploited than ever; that the brave fighting men in the field in Guinea Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia face an arsenal of weapons produced by the working men of Western Europe and North America and supplied with the connivance of their governments; that businessmen and financiers in the west continue to reap a huge harvest of ill-gotten wealth from the sweated labour and rich assets of our people.'

It was the recognition of such hard and unpalatable realities emerging from the facts placed before them above all by the delegates of the fighting liberation movements, which led the delegates at Khartoum to adopt unanimously their decisions and resolutions. Instead of appealing vaguely to world opinion, they placed their emphasis on practical support to those brave freedom fighters of Africa who arms in hand are daily risking their lives in an all out war of liberation which alone can really succeed in overcoming the menace of fascism and racialism to African and world peace.

The Declaration which was adopted by the Khartoum Conference is appended to this article and deserves careful study and attention. They represent the consensus of

opinion at the largest and most important gathering of delegates from all the continents ever to have considered what is now recognised to be a major international question.

While these documents must be allowed to speak for themselves, the present writer would like to add a few general observations concerning the significance and outcome of the historic Conference at Khartoum.

Both the list of participants and the political standard of the decisions testify to the great overall success of the Conference. This success was largely due to the excellent preparatory work, to the very substantial material contribution of the members of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committees, particularly those of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, to the hospitality of the Sudanese Government and the hard work done by the Sudanese Preparatory Committee. It was also due in no small measure to the political maturity and the striking factual material submitted by the six national liberation movements.

The Khartoum Conference firmly established that these six movements have a common struggle against a common enemy, and that they are winning on the battlefield their right to be considered in every sense the future governments of the countries in which their people live It contributed enormously to the clarification of such problems as: Who are the rightful leaders of the oppressed peoples in these areas? What are their aims? What is the duty of their friends and well wishers abroad?

At the same time one must note, regretfully, that there were also some negative features. Most notable of these was the inexplicable absence of representatives of nearly all the independent states of East, West and Central Africa. No one dubts the sterling support which such governments as those of Tanzania and Zambia have given and are giving to the liberation movements of the South. The presence of their representatives at Khartoum would have contributed a great deal towards completing and solidifying this remarkable expression of world solidarity with peoples so closely their neighbours and kinsfolk.

The real effects of the Conference will only be seen in the

effectiveness with which the excellent resolutions taken are subsequently transferred into practice. Khartoum must be seen as the opening, not the culmination, of a new phase of the world solidarity novement with the victims of colonialism and racialism in Southern Africa. It was a beginning, not an end.

M. H.

The Declaration of Khartoum

FROM MORE THAN FIFTY countries and from a number of international organisations we came to Khartoum to support those fighting to rid Africa of the remains of colonialism.

We met at a time when the forces of National Liberation, enjoying the support of the forces of progress and socialism, are challenging the aggressive forces of imperialism, colonialism and racism, and are scoring new victories for their freedom, independence and social progress.

We met to face the challenge to Africa and to humanity presented by Portuguese colonialism and the white supremacy regimes of Southern Africa.

We heard fresh and authoritative reports from those who actually suffered, endured and fought against these vile tyrannies.

Our conference heard with great indignation about the forced silencing of opposition, of the thousands of African patriots suffering imprisonment, torture and death for demanding their rights and human dignity. We learnt with grave concern how the imperialist countries are backing the anti-African regimes with money and arms.

The Conference received authentic and alarming evidence of the serious threat presented by the imperialist-backed Pretoria-Lisbon-Salisbury alliance to the independence of every African country and to world peace.

We have decided with unanimity that Africa and the world must take action to give more effective help to the African Liberation Movements fighting for the freedom of their peoples. Coming to Khartoum from all over Europe, from Asia, from America, North and South, we solemnly resolve that this Khartoum Conference shall prove a historic new stage of advance in Africa's march to freedom, independence and unity.

A state of war exists over a large area of the African continent. Since February 4th, 1961, the people of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique under the leadership of MPLA, PAIGC

and FRELIMO have been fighting, in a vast armed confrontation, the crumbling Portuguese colonial empire, sustained by the NATO powers. The wars of national liberation in these African areas have reached a level where substantial areas have been liberated, have achieved sovereignty, where exploitation by international monopolies has been ended.

In Zimbabwe, the guerrilla fighters of the military alliance of the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU) and the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa are conducting increasingly widespread guerrilla operations against the combined police-military forces of the illegal Smith regime and fascist Republic of South Africa. In Namibia, guerrilla forces of the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) are fighting and intensifying the liberation struggle against the South African colonial forces.

The spreading and developing aggressive war by imperialists is of a direct and immediate concern to the whole world, and in the first place to the peoples of Africa. It is part of the world-wide anti-imperialist struggle; the fight of unconquerable Vietnamese people to rid their country of American imperialist aggression; of the mounting fight of the fraternal Arab peoples against imperialist-backed Zionist aggression.

The war for Southern Africa is not only the internal problem of the liberation movements and peoples involved. It has already bleen internationalised.

Portugal the poorest and most backward country of Europe, could only carry on this ever-increasing war by offering a share for West Germany, U. S., and other imperialist countries in the profits of the African territories concerned.

Similarly the racist regimes in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe are sustained by the massive practical support of world imperialism, and in particular British imperialism, who reap huge dividends from the natural wealth and the cheap forced labour of the African inhabitants, rigthful masters of these lands.

The British government in pursuit of its imperialist designs by continuing its colonialist oppression of the African people of Zimbabwe has risked a racial war in Southern Africa with dangers of engulfing the neighbouring independent African countries.

Expansionist South African imperialism, in close alliance with Portuguese colonialism and the settler regime in Zimbabwe, and backed by world imperialism, constitutes a grave menace to

the neighbouring African independent countries, and ultimately to the independence of every African State.

The existence of these racialist regimes, their aggressive alliance, and their economic, financial, political and military support by imperialism constitute a major threat to world peace.

The Conference declares its fervent and unequivocal support for the freedom fighters of the Portuguese colonies and Southern Africa.

It calls upon the progressive, anti-imperialist forces of the entire world to back the armed struggles which have been forced upon them as the only possible alternative to slavery for the forseeable future.

The Conference calls upon democratic forces everywhere to support the political demands of the liberation movements for independence, democracy and the unqualified and immediate implementation of majority rule.

The Conference calls upon all governments to recognise the liberation movements as the alternative and future governments of the territories concerned; to break off all relations with the illegal and despotic regimes, to give every facility and aid to the representatives and supporters of the liberation movements and remove every let or hindrance to their noble missions.

This Conference calls on all democratic organisations and individuals in all countries constantly to educate public opinion regarding the true facts of the situation in unliberated Africa, to contribute material aid for the freedom fighters, for the defence of political prisoners and support their dependents; to isolate the racists from participation in every sort of international sporting, cultural and similar activities.

FORWARD TO THE LIBERATION OF PORTUGUESE COLONIES AND THE OPPRESSED LANDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA!

FREEDOM FOR THE SOUTH — THE ONLY SAFEGUARD OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE, UNITY AND PEACE!

Beneath the Golden Surface

Aspects of Work and Wealth in South Africa's Gold Mines

Toussaint

WE HAVE BECOME USED to the slogan by which South Africa tries to sell itself to the world's pleasure seekers – 'The Land of Contrasts' – complete with juxtaposed pictures of tribal kraals and twentieth-century cities, mountain peaks and golden beaches. Yet despite the tiredness of the slogan the reality remains. It *is* a land of contrasts. But the sharpest contrasts remain hidden beneath the veil of censorship and secrecy. This is the contrast between the wealth of those who own and rule the golden land, and the poverty of those who make the gold.

One side only of this coin is publicised – the side of wealth and prosperity. This is the side of the coin exclusive to the white upper crust of the society. It is the side which is presented to the world as if it were the whole of South African society. Its prosperity is envied abroad, and regarded as a 'miracle' by its beneficiaries at home. Everywhere – on this side of the scene – there is growing and flowing wealth. The prosperity seems unending. The boom seems unparalleled, even in this golden land.

'The market value of all listed shares (on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. T.) rose from 16.5 thousand million rand to 23 thousand million in the single year 1968' records the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*, 'not much less than the country's entire net national income in the year.'

'Diamond sales at a new high' reports the *Times Business*

News from South Africa. Sales in the past year have risen by 22 percent, to a new record of £250 million for the year just ended.

This is the picture everywhere in the field of company promotion, stock market speculation and high finance. It is reflected in slightly less heady figures in the balance sheets of industrial and commercial companies. Without a doubt, the prosperity reckoned thus is without parallel. Profits are rocketing upwards. Fortunes are being made quickly. This vast prosperity is carrying almost the entire white upper class and middle class along in its flood. For where as in many other countries stock exchange and stock-market speculation is reserved to a select few from the financial crusts of society only, here in South Africa it is different. Here, for a long time, the stock exchange has been an open gambling house for almost the entire middle class; they live in the midst of gold mines, surrounded by mining men with inside knowledge of the mysteries. Here, for years, white-collar workers, professional men, small traders and farmers have 'played the stock-exchange' as elsewhere they play football pools or lotteries, or follow the horses. Here stock-exchange speculation is a national disease of the white population, from the middle classes up.

The current boom has been, in part, fed by the disease, and has itself carried the disease further. In the past year, the number of transactions on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange was double the number of the year before — which was itself one of the best years on record. Its atmosphere is one of unrestrained optimism, where it seems that prices move only one way — up; where there are only winnings, never losses. There is a gambling fever, in which the trend of investment is described by the *Sunday Times* as '. . . away from the security and regular income yielded by fixed interest investments, and into a "go-go" desire for capital growth at almost any cost.'

NEVER SO GOOD.

It is in this atmosphere that white South Africans have come to believe firmly that 'We've never had it so good.'

Or at least those white South Africans — perhaps the majority of them — who are above the income level of the industrial workers. This credo, which once carried MacMillan and the Tories to a temporary ascendancy in British politics, has carried Vorster and his Nationalist Party government to levels of popularity amongst the white electorate which no previous Nationalist government has ever enjoyed. Government support has risen perhaps less spectacularly than other stocks on the booming market, but just as steaily, and in direct sympathy with the stock price index. The white parliamentary opposition, overwhelmed finally by the combination of its own unprincipled opportunism and the economic boom, has declined as a serious force to the stage where no realistic observer any longer believes that it can ever again return.

On the surface then, for apartheid South Africa, this is the golden age. It is prosperous, expansive, confident. Its government is strong amongst the electorate, safe from electoral challenge. The internal challenge from the African majority, which not so many years ago looked seriously threatening, is silenced by the strong arm of government suppression. On the surface.

It is not easy to discover any other reality beneath the surface. Police suppression, intimidation and terror have silenced the real opposition; but they have also driven it beneath the surface, into secret ways and secret places. No one outside can any longer know what passions seethe, what ferments brew beneath the surface. Censorship conceals from the public eye the few tell-tale ripples of discontent and protest which break surface; and what censorship does not conceal, fear glosses over and turns truth-seekers and fact-finders away from dangerous inquiry. Extending racial ghettoes raise walls around each racial group, so that less and less of the truth of what happens in one ghetto, or what moves its inmates, filters through the walls to others.

In this atmosphere, facts are difficult to glean. And yet to understand what is happening in the country it is necessary to get a picture of what is beneath the golden surface, difficult though the task may be. In this article, sketchy though it be, I will attempt to look beneath the surface at the men

on whom, finally, South Africa's prosperity rests — the African gold miners. I do not pretend that the picture given here tells the whole story; in the circumstances, with statistics concealed as though they were atomic secrets, with facts systematically and deliberately withheld, the picture must be incomplete. Nevertheless, it reveals the real, stark contrast of wealth and poverty — and much else beside — which festers beneath the prosperous surface.

THE CHANGING TIMES.

The South African gold mines are a single, closely-knit grouping of finance-mining houses, employing almost 400,000 African workers, and almost fifty thousand whites, many of them in salaried and managerial capacities. They remain the solid, stable core of the country's wealth, both its internal wealth and its comparatively favourable balance of international trade. Apart from these constants, much else is changing.

The numbers of men employed, for example, is declining — not spectacularly, but very steadily. In the years from 1961 to 1965, the number of white employees dropped from 49,000 to 44,000, the number of African from 399,000 to 375,000. Paradoxically, this decline in the number of workers has taken place while the tonnage of gold-bearing rock mined has increased. (For some of the reasons behind this, see below.) But more striking is the fact that white workers dropped in number by 10.3 per cent, the Africans by only 6 per cent. This can mean only one thing; that despite increases in productivity in the period, the industry depends increasingly on its African labour force — that is to say on those who are debarred by the Mines and Works Act from doing skilled work and from drawing skilled workers' wages.

The wage bills for the same period tell a further story. Total wages of the white workers rose by 11.6 per cent in this period; taking the declining numbers who shared this total into account, it represents an *average* increase in wages of 25 per cent. Africans' wages, on the other hand, rose by a total of 13.6 per cent, representing an average wage

increase of 20 per cent. Thus it is apparent that the gap in wages between whites and Africans widens as time goes on, even while the industry's dependence on the African workers increases.

Taken over a long period, the increasing gap between white and African wages is startling. If one looks at cash wages only, without allowance for payments in kind (food, housing etc), the ratio of white to African wages remained fairly stable until the year 1946 — being 11.7 to 1 in 1911, and 12.7 to 1 in 1946. But since 1946 — and for much of the miners standards this was the critical year — the ratio has widened from 12.7 to 1 to 17.6 to 1 in 1966, which is the last year for which I have been able to gather statistics. Lest it be thought that this widening gap in wage rates is explained by the fact that Africans get certain payments in kind, such as food, compound accomodation and so on which are not available to whites, the ratio for *total* earnings, cash and kind shows the same trend — 11.1 to 1 in 1946, 15.2 to 1 in 1966.*

The significance of the year 1946 is not only that this was the year when World War II ended, but chiefly that it was also the year of the last great strike of African miners, which was brutally smashed by virtual martial law imposed by the Smuts government. On the one hand, the war's end raised the white wage scale sharply, by providing the opportunity for the white workers to press for and obtain the permanent incorporation in their wage rates of a war-time 'Cost-of-living allowance', which had been previously treated as an extra payment on a sliding scale, related to the government's cost-of-living index of retail prices. African miners had pressed for a cost-of-living allowance for themselves. But here the combined weight of employers and government had been thrown into the scale, against them. No cost-of-living allowance was ever paid them. This virtual pegging of wages in the face of the steep wartime rise in commodity

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* All figures for wages given here are in terms of actual cash received. They do not take into account the steady rise in the cost of living. The apparent increase in wages is thus only in cash terms, and not in terms of real purchasing capacity.

prices was one of the factors which finally triggered off the African miners' strike of 1946. The strike was crushed. The Union was virtually illegalised. The security system in the mine compounds was tightened up, and organisers and 'agitators' given short shrift by private company police, aided and abetted by the government. From that date, the gap in wages began to widen rapidly. The white workers moved ahead, with trade union rights, legal collective bargaining, and powerful political support from both Nationalist and United Party seeking to win the important bloc of white miners' votes. The African workers remained tied down, impotent, imprisoned in the police-camp atmosphere of the compounds.

WHAT PRICE WHITE SKINS?

Three years after the mines strike, South Africa devalued its currency. The price of gold rose, almost overnight, from R 17.3 to R 24.8 per fine ounce. The white miners, taking full advantage of their opportunities demanded and finally won, through legal negotiation with the employers, a new wage agreement. Minimum wage rates rose by 15 per cent; a pension fund was established, overtime rates rose from 1½ normal to double normal rates; a bonus of R 50 for every worker with over 1 years service was agreed, together with increased provident fund benefits and increased holiday allowances. For the Africans — nothing.

The effects have been startling. Between 1948 and 1950, average wage rates of white workers rose by 8 cents per shift; those of African workers by 4½ c. Or, in current terms, white miners wages per shift have risen on average by R 2.88 per shift in the years 1960 to 1966; Africans wages by 16 cents.

'In real terms, (i. e. in terms of what wages really buy. T)' writes Dr. F. Wilson Ph. D. in the *Financial Mail* (10. 5. 68) 'the cash wages which Africans earn on the gold mines are, on the evidence, no higher, and possibly even lower today than in 1911.'

In every field of South African labour, the gap between white and African wage rates is far larger than the gap be-

tween skilled and unskilled elsewhere. This abnormal gap reflects the colonial-type status of the African worker, and the status of the white worker as part of the white ruling group. Gold mining has always had a somewhat wider gap in wages than in other South African heavy industries, and a considerably wider gap than that existing in industry.

But in recent years, with the widening of the black-white wage ratio in gold mining, another change has come over the general picture of labour conditions. This is the relative decline of gold-mining rates in comparison with wage rates paid in other sectors of the economy. In the past it was always accepted by industrialists that the gold-mining industry, by virtue of its position as the largest single united employer of African labour, set the standard for wages of African workers in all fields. So much has this concept become accepted in South Africa, that the Chamber of Mines has always defended its refusal to increase African wage rates by protesting, patriotically (!), that any concessions on their part must be followed by a general upward revision of wages for Africans in all industries, and thus set in train a spiral of rising costs. This is not to say that wages elsewhere were ever the same as in mining. Always, outside employers — with the exception of farmers — have paid higher wages to African workers, partly because they have had to compete with mine recruiting agents for labour when labour has been scarce; partly because coming later on the scene than mining they had to raise the wage offer to attract workers from mining; partly because industry has sought higher levels of skill — including literacy — and a more stable work-force, than mining, where the standard contract is 270 shifts, approximately a year.

Mining, then, set the *lowest* level of wages at which African industrial workers could be induced to work. Others competed, but at wage levels established as close to that lowest limit as possible. Accordingly, until about the second world war, wages in industry for comparable skills were slightly — and only slightly — higher than in mining.

But in recent years the picture has changed radically. Industry has expanded its labour needs vastly as a result of

both war-time industrial expansion and current expansion. Wage rates have risen in industry generally far faster than in mining, so that today wage rates in mining no longer bear any relevance to the rates paid in industry. An example of the vast and growing difference between mining and industrial wages is given by Dr. Wilson (op. cit.).

> Today the *minimum* wage for an African steel worker, for example, is R 1.52 for an eight hour day, while the *average* black gold miner earns only 58 c for a somewhat longer day.

SPECIAL EXPLOITATION.

How does it happen that despite the boom in every field of industrial employment, and despite the ever fiercer competition amongst employers for the available able-bodied male labour, gold mining alone has stood almost still while others have moved ahead? The explanations for this phenomenon are of different kinds.

On the trade union – collective bargaining front, the special factors in gold mining are these: that the miners' trade union was smashed and virtually illegalised in 1946, at the time of the last great strike; in other industries, trade unions survive to this day, despite all the legal harassment that has mounted against them under the Nationalist government, and despite the constant victimisation of union leaders and militants, and the virtual illegalisation of the S. A. Congress of Trade Unions by proscription and banning of its personnel. Since 1946, there has not been any spokesman or body to negotiate on behalf of the miners, or any possibility of open organisation.

Again, in almost every other industry, workers can and do take direct action against individual employers, even on a single factory or single department basis, often without any trade union organisation. And employers, faced with direct action in times of considerable prosperity and growth, have been forced to concede increased wages and better standards despite the minimum standards laid down on an industry-wide basis by a wage determination or industrial agreement negotiated with the white trade union in the

industry. In gold mining, on the other hand, individual employers have never at any time negotiated with groups of workers. The whole ownership of the industry is so tightly centralised through the Chamber of Mines that wage rates are set by the Chamber for all employers; contracts of employment are for conditions set by the industry as a whole; and in truth the workers neither see nor know any individual employer. They are employees of virtually a single master scattered over many mines; employed by an unseen, unknown corporate employer who operates not from the mine shaft or the mine compound but from an office miles remote. An action of any single group of miners is treated as a threat to the industry as a whole; the Chamber's private Security Police come into operation, and the entire weight of the employers' formidable Chamber is brought into the struggle. On this basis, it may well be doubted whether individual group action on any shaft or mine can succeed. In fact, except on minor matters of some purely local grievance, it never has.

Finally, on this front, there is the special role of the white miners and their trade unions. For these workers, special categories of jobs classed as skilled' are reserved by the Mines and Works Act. No other group of white workers in the country has been at such pains to guard these entrenched priviliges of a white skin against African advancement as fiercely as the white miners. It is a commonplace of history that in 1922 the white miners called a general strike, and finally organised armed commandos in a virtual military rebellion in order to preserve the ratio of white to black miners from an employer's attempt to change the ratio by increasing the number of Africans employed. The tradition of white militancy has died, but not the tradition of bitter opposition to any African advance.

Four years ago, for instance, the white miners' trade unions fought and finally defeated another attempt at advancing the African workers — an attempt again proposed by the employers themselves, not the African miners. The Chamber of Mines itself (Mining Survey, September 1966) describes the situation thus:

Means must be found to prevent the translation of this shortage (i. e. of skilled labour. T.) into unproductive increases in wage levels. The proposals for monthly pay (in place of daily for white miners. T.) based on a reorganisation of work underground were given expression in the so-called 'job-experiment' carried out on 12 selected mines. The (white) miner's responsibility for blasting and personal examination of areas where blasting had taken place under his charge was unchanged. In no instance did the European miner hand over to Bantu any responsibility whatsoever for the handling of explosives, the marking and charge-up of holes and the conducting of blasting operations. The main principle involved the shifting of some duties and responsibilities for underground work from white mine workers to experienced Bantu, notably the 'seeing-in' of working gangs in areas where no blasting had taken place. This absolved the white miner from the time consuming duty of examining every working place personally before his gang of Bantu could enter and start work, and eliminated many man-hours of waiting time on the part of the Bantu themselves.

This then was the subject of the ill-fated experiment. The results were simple — the Bantu proved that they could do more responsible work, and safety on the mines was not affected. No employees were retrenched. The experiments showed that higher productivity could be achieved, enabling White miners and their Bantu assistants to enjoy higher earnings and improved status, and at the same time offering mines, especially older ones, the prospect of reduced working costs and longer lives.

But it was not to be. Opposition from certain members of the Mine Workers' Union (white. T.) most of whom were not connected with the experiment and may not have understood it, led to the appointment of a Government commission of inquiry, on the issue of whose report the Government decided to end the experiment.

(For those not versed in South African peculiarities it should be explained that the white miners union has been a front organisation of the governing Nationalist Party for a long time. It acts as a useful Nationalist government weapon to bring the predominantly. English-speaking and United Party employers in the industry to heel, and to offset the vast economic power which this non-Nationalist body of employers wields, not always in precisely the manner the Government would wish.)

In the account given above, the Chamber of Mines paints itself as philanthropic and liberal. The picture is, naturally

somewhat distorted. Its aim was — as always — to reduce costs by advancing African workers into categories of jobs now barred to them, but *without any increase in pay.* The white miners union, on the other hand, fought the proposal to destruction not because it denied the African workers increased pay for increased responsibility, but simply because it provided opportunities for African workers — even at rates of pay which are so vastly inferior to their own — to take new responsibilities or learn new skills.

SPECIAL DISCRIMINATION.

Why white miners should be consistently so much more hostile to African advancement in this industry than are white workers in other industries is, perhaps, a matter for a study in its own right. But one special factor of the mining industry needs to be considered. It is that in this industry the white worker's own ability to rise in the scale of pay and responsibility in step with African advancement is limited.

In industry generally, especially in manufacturing, as African workers have moved into positions of skill and responsibility, and into higher wage brackets, the white workers above them have also moved up, into managerial positions, and into the category of monthly-paid 'employees' rather than weekly paid 'workers'. Where this has been possible — and in this period of boom and expansion with consequent grave shortages of white managerial and supervisory personnel it has been widely possible — white trade union opposition to African advancement has been less bitter than in mining.

In gold mining, on the other hand, it would appear that the possibilities of white advancement are more restricted. White workers have always had open to them — and have in fact always stepped from the artisan ranks into those managerial and supervisory positions *which exist at the mine site itself.* From here, there is no way up, except to move from the mine itself to 'head office' — a vast shift from the world of work and production to the world of paper, white collars and administration, far removed physi-

cally, geographically and in class basis from the mine site. Furthermore, though the production of gold has increased steadily from year to year, the labour force has actually declined as shown above, so that new job prospects for the men at the top have not been present in mining as they have in other expanding industries. Thus the African miner in this, as in every other aspect of labour in South Africa, is at the worst end of the scale, pinned in his position by the fierce hostility of the white miners who know that they cannot rise on the back of an African advance, but see themselves only as threatened in their privileged position by it.

There is a noticeable paradox in the situation set out above. Gold production rises, the labour force falls, and yet the employers complain of serious shortages of labour and dangerous rises in costs of production. The paradox needs, perhaps, some special explanation. The figures show that from 1961 to 1965, while the number of white workers fell by 10.3 per cent, and of African workers by 6 per cent, the tonnage of rock mined rose by 12 per cent. Productivity has thus advanced considerably during this period — without any comparable increase in African wages. But more significant is the fact that the gold produced rose far more rapidly than the increase in the tonnage of rock crushed, showing an increase of 44 per cent in the same five years. This spectacular increase is a direct reflection of the country's rising price structure, which results in rising mining costs through increased prices of stores, fuel, services and transport. While gold prices remain steady- as they have, substantially, in this time, rock bearing comparatively little gold becomes 'uneconomic' to mine; that is, it cannot any longer, produce the rate of profit demanded by shareholders. So as costs rise, the mining companies discard the low-grade ore, and turn to higher-grade, producing more gold per ton of rock with every rise in costs.

This then is the final answer to the Chamber of Mines constant claim that any increase in wages will spell death to the low-grade mines, and disaster to the country. For, in their scramble to maintain high profit rates in the face of rising costs, they are in fact discarding the low-grade ore, and

reaping higher profits from the deal. In their own get-rich-quick drive, the Chamber of Mines has joined the spirit of 'go-go' gambling in South Africa. 'It is estimated' says former Chamber President H. C. Koch, 'that gold worth R1,000 million has been rendered uneconomic in this five year period'. Or as some might say, scrapped on the altar of gold-mining profits.

The future of the African miners has also been affected, almost imperceptibly, by the fact that in the years since the second world war the Witwatersrand has declined in mining significance. This complex of towns stretching almost unbroken by intervening countryside from Randfontein to Springs, taking in two of the greatest industrial cities in the land, Germiston and Johannesburg, once produced *all* South African gold. Here the gold miners, segregated though they were in mine compounds, rubbed shoulders over week-ends and in off-duty hours with the urban proletarians. Here they picked up and imbibed the ideas and currents of thought which flared amongst the local townspeople; here they saw for themselves trade union action and political struggle, strikes, boycotts, pickets, marches. Here the miners learnt the ways of political and industrial action.

But the Witwatersrand, as a mining centre has declined sharply; its mines, many of them 'low-grade' are closing. In 1949, near the beginning of the decline, the Witwatersrand still mined 89 per cent of all South African gold. In 1965, its share was down to 19.4 per cent and still falling. As the old mines have closed, new ultra-deep mines have opened up in the Orange Free State, and in the neighbourhood of Klerksdorp in the Western Transvaal. Here the miners live still in compounds, but around them is the enervating, stultifying atmosphere of platteland village and white farmland, away from the revolutionary influences of the towns, without sight of or contact with the struggles of the rest of the African population, and virtually sealed off from the industrial heart ot the country behind the golden curtain.

THE NEW COLONIALISM.

Perhaps more significant than this in understanding what is happening to the miners is the change in national composi-

tion of the African miners themselves. Once predominantly South African, with numbers augmented by a minority of men recruited from outside South Africa, the picture today is of an industry over two-thirds of whose African workers are imported into the country from abroad. The number of South Africans has fallen steadily, from 166,000 in 1936 to 131,000 thirty years later — and this during a period of the most rapid drift of African males from subsistence farming in the reserves and rural labouring to industrial work. In those same years, the number of Africans imported into the gold mines from outside the country rose from 131,000 to 249,000. Thus two out of three African miners in South Africa come from outside, work their contract period of about one year, and are shipped home — to Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho and Botswana. A part of their total wages for the period — known in mining jargon as 'deferred pay' is shipped back with them for payment to them in their home country — explaining in part at least some of the fawning subservience of the governments concerned towards South Africa.

Years ago, in formulating its programme, the South African Communist Party described South African society as 'colonialism of a special type'. Not surprisingly, colonialism of a special type has produced special forms of exploitation, of which gold mining is the most outstanding. For here classical colonialism is stood upon its head! Classically, imperialism exports capital to the sources of cheap labour and raw materials. South Africa *imports* labour to the source of capital and raw materials.

Classically, the gold mining companies were regarded as the representatives in South Africa of foreign imperialism, of British and other finance capital. Perhaps they still are, for the dominant control still appears to rest with British and American finance, difficult though it now is to disentangle the intricate interwoven financial-power network which constitutes the real commanding centre of the Chamber of Mines. But whatever was once a simple truth, is today more complex. Increasingly, over the years, South African capital and South African capitalism has penetrated into the

tangled mesh of mining finance. And here it has created a special type of colonialism, based on importation of foreign labour to maintain the country's fundamental financial and economic base. We are seeing here the economic origins of a special type of South African imperialism. The one-time colony of Britain has come of age.

Perhaps it is only a beginning. But it is a vital and significant beginning. Classically, political penetration follows capital. South Africa is no exception; only in this case political penetration follows the recruiting agents. Malawi, Mozambique, and Lesotho are gradually being drawn into the imperial network of South Africa; their workers work cheap — cheaper than South Africans are willing to do — for the foreign capitalists, even if they work abroad. South African finance penetrates into their territories, gradually turning their governments into clients and puppets. This is the process that is under way, built on the foundations of South African gold mining.

It is not, certainly, classical imperialism. If the British workers shared in crumbs from the imperial exploitation of Africa, because of the special nature of South African society, the African worker of South Africa at least shares in none of the spoils of South African imperialism. What 'crumbs' there are are reserved for the white workers. This is why, it is possible here in South Africa to forge a real fighting alliance between the workers of the 'imperialist' country, and the exploited foreign workers who are brought in to work in the gold mines. — a possibility that could not exist in other 'classical' imperial relationships with their colonies.

It is a special feature of South Africa — and perhaps the Achilles heel of its ruling class. For here the very foundation of its economy can be attacked, and its citadels shaken. It is for this reason that the liberation of Malawi and Mozambique are vital for the South African liberation movement. It is for this reason that the South African liberation movement has always urged those countries to follow Zambia and Tanzania, and put an end to recruiting of workers for the South African mines. It is for this reason that

the South African liberation movement must not cut itself off in national self-preoccupation from these 'foreigners' in their midst, but must seek to influence them and join with them in joint struggle for wages, skilled jobs and the liberation.

The Southern Sudan

J. U. Garang

FIGHTING HAS BEEN GOING ON for six years now in the South of Sudan. I deal with some of the details of the secessionist revolt in a supplementary note appended to the present article, but my main purpose is to set in perspective the historical, social and political setting against which these events are taking place.

The problem of the Southern Provinces of the Sudan has been and continues to be a subject of discussion in the camp of the friends of the Sudanese people and in that of their enemies. British and Italian television and press have used it as propaganda fuel to cause animosity between the African and Arab peoples on our continent. Therefore, perhaps it is important to let our friends and brothers know something of the true situation.

This is the more so because the Sudan occupies a unique geographical position, a link and a point of contact between the Arab and African peoples and of their cultures. Further, the Sudan has what is, perhaps, one of the most well-established Communist Parties in Africa and so, naturally, progressive Africans have a right to know in what way Sudanese communists meet the challenge of the national question.

The Southern problem is not the only national question in the Sudan. Though it is the most acute and the most well known, there are others in the West and East of the country which, in recent years, have begun to assume a significance of their own. As in most African States the Sudanese population is heterogeneous. It is composed of diverse national groupings and tribes, each settled compactly in a different region and all at different stages of development. The centre of the country is inhabited by the Arab nationality which is more or less homogeneous, speaking a highly developed

*l*anguage, and economically, politically and culturally far more advanced than the rest of the population. For centuries it has maintained close ties with Egypt and benefitted a great deal from those contacts. The Arab nationality is about 39 per cent of the total population. Bordering on Eritrea and the Red Sea is a national grouping, the Beja. Essentially camel breeders, the *Beja* occupy an extremely arid region which has forced them to live a nomadic life. Today the *Beja* have put forward demands for regional autonomy. They number two million. In the far West there are also non-Arab tribes, principally the *Fur* who, until 1916, maintained a sultanate of their own and today have put forward a claim for some sort of regionalism and have organised a secret society threatening violence. The *Nuba* of Kordofan province have similar claims.

The Southern Sudanese people, like the *Nuba* and *Fur* are negroid, speak about 45 different languages and constitute about 30 per cent of the total population. Because there are so many languages their intelligensia generally address each other in English but the commercial language and *lingua franca* in the area, particularly in their towns and other centres, is Arabic.

It is obvious from these facts that the national question must be and is given great weight by the Sudanese Communist Party.

EARLY PERIOD:

The origins of the Southern question can be said to date back to Turko-Egyptian rule which incorporated what is now the Southern Sudan into its Sudanese colony in 1838 following the conquest of Northern Sudan in 1821. The Turko-Egyptian administration had definite objects in the Sudan, namely the securing of gold, ivory, ostrich feathers and slaves for the Khedive's army in Egypt. Turko-Egyptian rule was corrupt and cruel. It levied heavy taxation in cash and kind. In the South this took the form of demanding from villages large and unreasonable quantities of ivory and ostrich feathers on pain of fire and devastation. But the main feature of this regime in the South was the introduction of slaves on a large scale to meet the demands of the

Khedivial army and for domestic service in the Arab World and in the Northern Sudan.

Members of the Arab tribes in the Northern Sudan played a big role in the trade, organised scores of armed bands and encouraged inter-tribal wars for the purpose. Naturally the constant harassment of the population by the slavers prevented normal life and made any progress impossible.

Following the Mahdist revolution of 1885 the Sudan became independent for 13 years. But slave trade continued to flourish, for among the staunchest supporters of the Mahdi were the big slave merchants who rescinded a new policy of the Turko-Egyptian administration prohibiting slavery.

Slave trade formed the main obstacle arresting the advancement of the Southern peoples and the contradiction between the slavers and the Southern people constituted the foremost problem of the day.

However, slave trade came to an end in 1898 following the reconquest of the Sudan by Britain and Egypt. It cannot therefore be considered a significant element in, or an essential cause of, the Southern problem today. Nevertheless it is important to mention it not only because it left bad anti-North memories in Southern minds and prejudices in Northern ones (which in themselves are important to the understanding of the situation), but also because the British administration was later to capitalise on this trade in executing its policy of divide and rule.

ERA OF BRITISH COLONIALISM:

The Southern problem has its main roots in the policies of British administration in the Sudan (Egypt played a very minor role in the administration of the country and after the Egyptian revolution, 1919–1924, Egypt ceased to play any role at all).

Conscious and unconscious policies of British colonialism caused gross inequalities in every field between the Southern and Northern (Arab) peoples. It is common knowledge that a capitalist power seizes a territory and turns it into a colony, not to advance the interests of its people, but to

monopolise a market and sources of raw materials as well as find opportunities for the export of capital. In the Sudan the main demand of British monopolies was long-staple cotton and this became the more important as the British grip on Egypt and her cotton was, over the years, becoming unstable and uncertain. By a mere geographical coincidence it so happened that lands of the Arab nationality along the Blue, White and the main Niles were the most suitable for the growing of long-staple cotton. They offered the easiest and cheapest opportunities for gravitational irrigation. Finally there were the potentialities of the Arab tribes as a market for manufactured goods, thanks to their being more culturally and socially advanced than other peoples of the Sudan.

All these factors taken together encouraged British colonialism to concentrate on exploiting the territories of the Arab nationality. The British developed the great Gezira cotton scheme, built railways to expedite trade and the export of cotton and gum, established towns, etc. But in doing so they unconsciously brought modern production and progress to the Arab nationality. Another factor from which the Arab nationality benefitted was the influence of Egypt. In the thirties and forties Egyptian Secondary Schools and Universities began to enrol hundreds of Sudanese students from the Arab nationality, thanks to a common language. Fearing the political influence of Sudanese graduates trained in Egypt, the British administration built secondary schools and a college in the Northern Sudan to train graduates in its own way. And so the number of educated men increased a great deal in the North.

The sum total of all this was that the Arab nationality came to be more advanced than the other national groupings of the country who, because of the poor nature of their territories or their being cut off by deserts or swamps or their remoteness from the sea, did not attract immediate British exploitation on a large scale. Herein lies one of the main sources of inequality between the North and the South.

But that is not all. British colonialism also consciously and deliberately perpetuated conditions of backwardness in

the South in fulfilment of its age old policy of divide and rule. What were the main features of this policy? They were: —

(a) the isolation of the South from the North and from the enlightened world in general. In 1922 the Governor-General passed a law known as the *Closed Districts Order* prohibiting any persons other than natives of the Sudan from entering the Southern Provinces unless by special permit. The order also *authorised* the Civil Secretary to prohibit *any native* of the Sudan from entering or residing in the South. Under this provision members of the Arab nationality were effectively kept out, except those trusted by the administration, and foreigners likely to criticise British policy could not enter the South.

In areas where Northern and Southern tribes came into contact, they were separated and large tracts of 'no-man's land' were left to divide them. The teaching of Arabic in Southern schools was forbidden and no Southerner was allowed to speak Arabic in Government offices. No Southerner was permitted to wear the *Jalabia* (the long robe worn by the Arab people), etc.

(b) the distortion of African and Sudanese history was systematically carried out in schools. The Arabs were presented as the only race who carried out slave trade in Africa. History books ware illustrated showing long caravans of chained black slaves being led on ropes by Arab slavers carrying whips. Nothing was mentioned about the role of European slavers in Africa nor of the Negro in the United States and how he got there. On the contrary, Europeans were presented as the gallant and God-fearing men who rescued the African from Arab slave trade. These 'gallant' men included explorers like Samuel Baker, Stanley and King Leopold of Belgium.

(c) education in the South was limited to the intermediate school level for the purpose of training a few minor clerks etc. for government offices. Even these schools were not many. There were only three in the whole of the Southern Provinces, an area of a quarter of a million square miles, and each had a total enrolment of from 70 to 100 pupils at

any one time. After 1944 a few Southerners were sent to Uganda secondary schools but not to the North.

(d) Southerners were discriminated against in the civil service. While their colleagues in the North doing the same work received the equivalent of twelve to fifteen pounds sterling per month, the Southerners were paid only twelve to forty shillings for the same period. Southern workers were being paid three shillings per month while their Northern equivalents got from twenty to sixty shillings.

And so it went on until 1954.

This policy was executed by the colonial administration because they had planned to partition the country and annex the Southern Provinces to the British 'possessions' of East Africa. When this failed, owing to Egyptian and Northern opposition and fear of world opinion, the policy nevertheless served as a lever to delay self-government for the Sudan on the argument that if the British left the country the South would oppressed by the North and that it was essential for the British to remain till such time as the South would have caught up with the North in economic, social and cultural development.

The important point, however, is that when the national liberation movement began in the North after World War II demanding self-determination and expulsion of the colonialists from the country, the South was not in a position to play any important role. Indeed the majority of the Southern leaders of the day, acting under the influence of British colonialist indoctrination, opposed the national liberation movement, citing the argument referred to above.

It will be apparent to anyone that when self-government was grudgingly conceded by Britain in 1954 and offices held by British personnel were Sudanised, no Southerners of sufficient calibre could be found to benefit from Sudanisation and almost all executive posts in the state fell to Northerners. These included posts held by the British in the South. Thus owing to the results of economic and other policies of colonialism the South found itself in an unequal position from the first day of independence in January 1956.

CONTRIBUTION OF NORTHERN RULING CIRCLES TO THE PROBLEM:

Thus it can be said that British colonialism is mainly responsible for the Southern Sudan problem, for even given a good and conscientious government at the time of independence and after, it would still have taken several decades to eliminate the inequality between the North and the South.

Nevertheless it is now 15 years since independence and nothing fundamental has been done by Sudanese governments to change the situation in the South. True, restrictions made by the British were removed. Many schools, hospitals and other social services were made or built in the South. Today there are many Southern university graduates holding executive and technical posts in the government and outside it. There are doctors and lawyers and engineers, though these are not many.

The essence of the Southern problem, however, remains untouched after the lapse of fifteen years. This essence is the distressing economic, social and cultural backwardness of the area and the problems of raising the living standards of the masses of the people. This is indeed a general problem for the whole country, but it is the more so for the national minority regions of which the South is one. Suffice it to say that at this moment about one and a half million Southerners go nude; and per capita income is the lowest in Africa.

Who is responsible for this situation? It is the capitalist and semi-feudal political parties that have been holding the reins of power since independence, as well as the circles standing behind them. For fifteen years these circles and their administrations have insisted on taking the Sudan along the capitalist road of development. But even in this they have not met with any success, for Sudanese capitalism is extremely weak. The country remains predominantly agricultural with only a few light industries, mainly controlled for foreigners. Fifty one per cent of the gross national product comes from in the traditional sector of natural economy and cattle-breeding.

They have opened the door wide to foreign capital, particularly from the World Bank, Britain and West Germany.

They have borrowed large sums from other countries too, including Italy, the United States, Kuwait and even Saudi Arabia, and they have invested the same in agriculture and in schemes intended to pave the way for the private sector. Thus they have been building dams, roads, railways and raising the salaries of the bureaucracy, members of Parliament and ministers etc. In the last three years the government borrowed 85 million pounds* from abroad.

Currently at the bidding of the World Bank behind which stands U.S. imperialism, they have begun to dismember the public sector and place it under independent boards and corporations preparatory to handing them over to the private sector. Thus railways, airways, power, state industries etc., which were run by ministries, have been handed over to boards.

The doors of the country are wide open to new colonialism, the main danger facing the Sudan today. At the same time elements of old colonialism still control important parts of the economy, particularly foreign trade and modern agriculture through their banks and insurance companies.

Side by side with this failure to build a modern economy and to raise the standard of living of the people, has been the failure of the capitalist and semi-feudal circles to build democracy and create stability in the country. Their attempt to establish 'Western' democracy has resulted in a great deal of instability because this democracy is divorced from the masses and does not express their aspirations.

The Constituent Assembly has 218 members and yet not a single one of them is a peasant in a country where over 90 per cent of the population are peasants. There is only one worker in that assembly. The progressive forces have also only one member. On the other hand about 40 per cent of the membership consists of tribal chiefs and other traditionalists who have an interest in maintaining the *status quo*. The rest consist of owners of large agricultural schemes, former British-reared bureaucrats, persons connected with foreign monopoly firms and corrupt professional politicians.

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* Sudanese Pounds.

Such a democracy cannot modernise the country nor end age-old poverty and ignorance. Still less can it seriously tackle the national question. But before proceeding I must indicate the role played by the Southern leaders in complicating the Southern problem and adding thereto.

THE ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN LEADERS:

From time to time there have been Southern leaders who saw the way to the solution of the Southern problem in alliance with the progressive and other anti-imperialist forces in the North for the purpose of liquidating the remnants of colonialism, shutting the door in the face of new colonialism and building a modern Sudan and new democracy.

However, these were very few and remain so today in view of the smouldering anti-North prejudices in the Southern provinces.

The vast majority of Southern political leaders, including Ministers, have consistently followed a reactionary road, now allying themselves with the Northern traditional parties (capitalist and semi-feudal), and now allying themselves with imperialism, or with both. They have never sought or desired alliance with the progressive forces in the North, though these are of great influence, as proved by the October 21st revolution of 1964.

In the period of the national liberation movement the majority of the Southern leaders resisted the demand for independence and wanted the British colonialists to stay. So openly were they echoing British views that the national liberation forces in the North lost faith in them and treated them warily as British stooges.

The majority of the Southern leadership leagued themselves with the Northern reactionary parties and circles and overthrew the October government.

Throughout the last 16 years (except under the military regime), the majority of the Southern leaders have been cooperating with the capitalist and semi-feudal circles in the North and participating in their governments. There has been no government formed in which one or another group

of them did not have ministerial representation. At the same time this has not prevented them from propagating poisonous ideas among the Southern masses, posing the Southern problem as one between the Arab and African races and generally inciting public opinion against the North as a whole. The object of this poisonous propaganda is to discourage contacts between the Southern people and the progressive forces in the North, and it has largely succeeded.

The Southern political leaders have never raised any slogan going to the essence of the Southern question. They have never called for the economic development of the South or for the raising of the standards of its people, or for the application of a new democracy as the only way towards the political solution of the problem. All their demands concern form, not substance. They consider that the problem can be solved within the present framework in the country. Hence their demands for federation, high posts in the civil service, etc. They do not understand under what conditions or prerequisites these 'solutions' can work.

The Southern leaders have therefore contributed to the problem. Their main role has been that of a reserve to local reaction and their imperialist allies.

STAND OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY:

In evaluating the Southern movement, the Sudanese Communist Party is naturally guided by the general principles of Marxism-Leninism on the national question and the extent of their relevance to the conditions of our epoch and our country in particular. As is well known, the attitude of communists towards a given national movement is determined by the question — does it advance the case of progress or social change, or does it not?

Our view of the movement of the Southern Sudan is that it is objectively a struggle against backwardness and for democracy.

As such, the movement can and will eventually form part of the democratic revolution in our country and the Southern problem cannot be fully resolved unless after the victory of that revolution.

At the moment, however, the leadership of the movement is in the grip of opportunists who, as we have seen above, are anti-progressive and flirt constantly with local reaction and neo-colonialism now raising slogans of self-determination or secession and now raising slogans which benefit only the intellectual stratum and petit bourgeoisie and not the masses.

In the specific conditions of our country and of Africa in general, our party has rejected the slogan of self-determination or secession for the South.

The slogan of self-determination and/or secession means the isolation of the Southern people from the progressive movement in the country. Having regard to the extremely backward conditions in the South (no developed working class, no developed peasantry, a very thin stratum of intellegentsia entirely unconscious of the dangers of imperialism and neo-colonialism: in short, no democratic movement), *self-determination or secession would mean the handing over of the Southern people to the imperialists on a silver platter.*

The Sudanese people, the entire Sudanese people, exercised their right to self-determination in 1956 when they won independence. The issue is no longer self-determination, but the completion of the democratic revolution begun in October 1964, and the establishment of a new democracy under which the political aspirations of the Southern people can be met.

And so as early as 1954, the Communist Party Central Committee raised the slogan of *Regional National Autonomy* for the Southern Sudan and the *right of the peoples of the South to develop their cultures, customs and other national peculiarities.*

This programme was affirmed and elaborated upon at the third congress in 1956 and at the fourth congress in 1967.

Since then it has been the subject of our daily activity.

At the round-table conference held in March 1965 between leaders of the North and South, and in the presence of observers from friendly governments, including Tanzania, Uganda, U. A. R., Ghana (Nkrumah) and Algeria, the Com-

munist Party placed its programme of Regional Autonomy on the agenda. Using mass pressure which was powerful after the revolution, the Communist Party forced even the reactionary parties to accept much of this programme. However, the programme was rejected by the opportunist Southern majority at this conference who insisted on secession.

Today it has become much clearer to us that there is little hope of solving the problem in the absence of a substantial democratic movement in the South. We are making a complete reassessment of our tactics and methods in the South, preparatory to our launching a new struggle aimed at building such a democratic movement.

The struggle in our country is assuming clear-cut lines. The reactionary forces have, for the first time, grouped themselves solidly together and are intent on consolidating all power in their hands by passing an undemocratic constitution — the so-called *Islamic* Constitution. On the other hand, the masses of the people in the modern sector of the economy are deserting the capitalist parties wholesale and coming over to the left. The slogans of land reform, the abolition of native and tribal administration (a stronghold of reaction), and the non-capitalist path of development, etc., are becoming the slogans of the masses. Conditions are maturing for a confrontation. In these conditions we will struggle to transform the South from being a reserve of reaction to becoming a vital force in the democratic revolution.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON THE ARMED CONFLICT IN THE SOUTH.

The armed revolt in the Southern Provinces of the Sudan began in Equatoria Province (bordering Uganda and the Congo and partly the Central African Republic) in 1963 and by 1964 had spread to the other two provinces.

Earlier, in August 1955, the Southern troops stationed in Equatoria had mutinied and they were joined by some of the police force stationed in Nzara, Yambio, Maridi Yei and Torit; all Equatorian towns. But order had been quickly restored, partly because of the intervention of the British

Governor-General. By October 1955, hostilities had completely ceased. The reason for that mutiny had been the dissatisfaction of Southerners with the way 'Sudanisation' was affected, and attempts by Northern District Commissioners to coerce public opinion to support the government of the day led by Sayed Ismail el Azhari, the present President of the Council of State.

It should be mentioned that Southern feelings had been worked up by propaganda originating from British and missionary agents, including the spreading of false rumours and the forging of documents to the effect that the then Prime Minister had secretly ordered massacres to be carried out in the South and that Southern troops would be lured to the North and shot.

Some of the mutineers had then escaped to Uganda with their arms and were those who started fighting in 1963.

In 1962 the late Mr. William Deng and others including some former members of Parliament escaped to Uganda where they set up a political party called *Southern Sudan Closed Districts Union* (later changed to *Sudan African National Union).* This organisation accused the North as a whole of installing the military regime as a means to block Southern demands for a federal Sudan. It thereupon issued a call for an armed uprising aimed at the partition of the country. It found support and financial aid from the Christian missionaries in Uganda and the Congo, particularly the Catholic Church. This aid was much increased after the military regime expelled all foreign missionaries from the Sudan in Feruary 1964. Financial aid was also received from the Christian Democratic Parties of West Germany and Italy as well as from churchmen and former colonial officials in London. The latter helped by publishing literature and in other ways.

Until the October 21st revolution there had not been any serious fighting except on the borders of Ethiopia and Uganda. The October government decided on a solution by peaceful means and ordered the army not to hunt down the rebels. Unfortunately a Southern Party known as the *Southern Front* insisted on secession and encouraged the rebels

to continue fighting. The rebels made use of the policy of the October Government and poured into the Southern Forests and plains from Uganda, Ethiopia, Congo and the Central African Republic. They sent bands to every district of the South and refused a peaceful solution short of secession.

When the October government fell in February 1965, new elections were held in April 1965 with the result that the reactionary Northern Parties won a majority and formed a government in June 1965. The Southern parties boycotted the election with the argument that no elections should be held in the South unless the problem was solved.

No sooner had the reactionary regime come to power than it launched a counter-offensive and began widespread repressions by carrying out mass arrests, assassinations, burning villages etc. Particularly atrocious were the burning of parts of Juba the massacre of more than 200 people on July 8, 1965 and the massacre at a wedding party in Wau on July 11, 1965 of 72 Southern government officials and others without justification whatsoever.

The fighting was greater in 1965 and 1966, but since then, though not many rebels have surrendered, both sides have tacitly limeted hostilities. There is little fighting now going on but the rebels, who number about 1000 men still remain in the bushes throughout the South and could step up fighting any time.

The rebels get arms from mysterious sources in Ethiopia where they maintain training camps near the border. But the main source of supply was (in 1965 and 1966) from the Congo, thanks then to Tshombe who was 'avenging' Sudanese aid to the Congolese revolution. The rebels also used to attack bands of Congolese revolutionaries and seize their arms.

We believe that British and Belgian imperialism, working through the Catholic Church and the Church Missionary Society did a great deal to encourage the rebels both morally and by supplying money to them. It is interesting to note that many of the missionaries who left the South are now to be found on the Sudan-Congo and Uganda borders, and

that responsibility for supplying the guerillas with arms, food, clothing and money was entrusted to one Saturnino, a Southern Catholic priest who was killed by Uganda troops in 1966 for meeldling with the Kabaka's movement.

Of all the border states Uganda has always been co-operative. Ethiopia's sympathy too is with the rebels but its hand has been restrained by fear that open aid to them would be met by a counter-move by the Sudan to aid the Eriterea rebels. Congo-Kinshasa is in the same position. There is no evidence that the Government of the Central African Republic has given overt aid, though none of these border governments has ever sealed its borders.

Letters to the Editor

Controversy about Nigeria

ON MARXISM AND NIGERIA.

Your contributor Albert Zanzolo opened up a very interesting — and long overdue — discussion in your last issue under the title 'The National Question and Nigeria'. In it he asks the question that is crucial for all Marxists: 'What is the correct proletarian outlook' on the Biafran independence movement? Unfortunately he fails to analyse it in depth. Instead he contents himself with the rather bald conclusion that Biafran secession '... could result in millions dying in a wave of secession all over the continent.' And in this as in all other democratic issues the part (that is Biafran independence) must give way to the general interests of the whole (that is African unity). 'This is too speculative and shallow an answer to be allowed to pass unquestioned. Could he not just as easily, without doing violence to the few theoretical principles he set out, have argued for example, that the crushing of Biafran independence struggle by superior armed force could result '... in a wave of suppression of national minorities all over the continent'? And equally, therefore, that the part — that is Nigerian state integrity, must give way to the whole, unity of Africa's peoples against imperialism?

Clearly then this speculative and seemingly 'practicalist' resoning is inadequate to answer the question; 'What is the correct Marxist policy towards Biafran secession?' The answer Marxists give to this question is too vital for the continuing integrity of Communist principle, and too vital for the strengthening of Marxism as an independent guide to

African policy, to allow Zanzolo's article to pass without further thought.

Marxists should be able to rise above the petty national and tribal passions of the day, and give Africa what it so sorely needs — an independent line of policy which will enable the working class and the socialist elements in Africa to intervene effectively in their own history, and lead the continent towards a socialist future. Biafra may well be a difficult issue for Marxists to now intervene effectively; it is hedged about with all the difficulties Zanzolo and an earlier article by Sol Dubula in your columns have set out — the scheming imperial intrigues, the oil resources, the self-appointed Colonels' regimes on both sides, and the standpoints of socialist countries, the Organisation of African Unity and of imperialism. But difficult or not, Marxists must seek to grapple with it from the standpoint of theory and principle, and not beswayed easily into unprincipled 'practicalism'.

Zanzolo, in stating the theoretical postulates of Marxism on the problem, has basically three things to say:

> 'That the right of secession and self-determination is supported by the proletariat when an oppressed nation seeks to separate from an oppressor nation.'
> 'Marxists do not support any and all national movements. We support national movements that in the concrete situation are progressive.'
> 'Such secession must be viewed in relation to the general struggle against imperialism as a whole in Africa and the world. And in this... the part must give way to the general interests of the whole.'

With this formulation, simplified though it is, there is little wrong. I think, however, that the first principle needs some amplification. Marxism distinguishes between the *right* of nations to self-determination, and the actual *act of secession*. Marxists at all times proclaim the *right* of nations to decide for themselves whether they wish to be inside or outside any amalgam of states. But while we are unequivocally for that *right,* we do not automatically favour the exercise of that right by an act of secession. It is this — the *expediency* of the act of secession which must be considered

concretely in relation to all the surrounding circumstances, before Marxists will support a movement for secession.

> 'The right of nations to self determination' Lenin wrote in 1913 '— that is, the constitutional guarantee of an absolutely free and democratic method of deciding the question of secession — must under no circumstances be confused with the expediency of a given nation's secession. The Social Democratic Party (i. e. Communist Party in today's terms. T.) must decide the latter question exclusively on its merits in each particular case in conformity with the interests of social development as a whole and with the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.'

What is the significance of this for Biafra? It is, I think, apparent that the Communists have a clear obligation to support and fight for the *right* of the people of Biafra to decide the question of secession by, as Lenin puts it, 'an absolutely free and democratic method'. Nothing, in my view, can render this Communist duty void in this particular case — neither the decisions of Colonel Gowon's government nor the decisions of the O.A.U., all of whom act from considerations of their own far removed from Communist principle. Communists must act independently for their own beliefs. And the fact that in this case our beliefs run counter to the general current in Africa, and even to the authoritarian claims of Colonel Ojukwu to speak for all the people of Biafra, renders the task harder but even more important for the future of Africa.

As I see it, there can be only two arguments against this. First the argument that Biafra is not 'a nation'. On this I agree completely with Zanzolo, who says: 'There is no need to engage in the futile argument as to whether some groups in Africa are "tribes" or "national groups".' Both tribes and nations are historically formed groupings, not fixed eternally in their categories but changing in correspondence with the changing nature of society. Tribes merge into nations with the process of the development of capitalism. Because that process in Africa is still in its infancy, the divisions between 'tribe' and 'nation' are not drawn with

the clarity and precision of the lines of demarcation in the advanced capitalist structure of Western Europe. Colonel Ojukwu claims — I do not know with what degree of accuracy — that Biafra is not another name for the Ibo tribe, but an amalgam of tribes. The evidence seems to show that it is at least a national grouping in the process of coalsecence into nationhood; if it is so, then the *right* of self-determination will have to be supported and fought for by Communists tomorrow, when the process is more fully developed. Only the most inflexible formalism can lead to the conclusion that that right should not be given today, even when the spokesmen of Biafra demand secession, and are visibly capable of carrying the support of some substantial numbers of the people with them in that demand.

The second argument against could be founded on an equally formalistic argument — that Biafrans are not oppressed by Federal Nigeria, and hence this is not a movement conforming to Zanzolo's formulation of 'an oppressed nation seeking to separate from an oppressor nation'. Zanzolo argues, in his article, that 'it will be extremely difficult to establish that the Ibo are a nation that was or will be oppressed by the rest of the people of Nigeria'. Doubtless it will. But the real difficulty lies not in establishing the facts about economic position of the various groups, or the civil liberties each enjoys. These facts can be established. But the difficulty is still, who decides? What is the measure of economic imbalance, of ratios of posts in civil service, commerce or industry each group holds, by which one is to decide the formal question 'Are they oppressed?' There do not seem to me any rules, any yard-sticks or scales by which to measure this objectively. And if there were, would any of our measures serve to persuade the Ibo they 'are not and will not be' oppressed, when once they have firmly made up their minds that they are? I do not believe it is the task of Communists to attempt this delicate measuring of oppression. Let the social scientists argue over it for years to come, sifting every last scrap of data, every minute statistic, and finally proclaim

a finding'. We are concerned not with measuring the world, but with changing it. And there are, for us, two simple cases where the right of self-determination must be advocated and fought for at the right time, not after history has moved by. Those are: where the oppression and discrimination is so patent that we take upon ourselves the attack upon it which will awaken the demand for self determination. The other, where the people themselves — rightly or wrongly in the eyes of social scientists — have decided thay are oppressed, and lash out against it.

Though we have extreme difficulty in hearing the voice of the Biafran people, and hear mainly the voice only of Colonel Ojukwu saying he speaks for the people, nevertheless the claim has been made powerfully that Biafrans *feel* themselves oppressed by Federal Nigeria and fear worse oppression in the future, perhaps even genocide. One has not heard any substantial opposition to this claim by any group of Biafrans, even though the pro-Nigerian press and radio would doubtless blazon such opposition if it existed. We have seen a impressive support for this claim from Biafrans living abroad, whose voices *are* heard. In the circumstances, I think the position is still clear. Communists, on present evidence, have a duty to proclaim the *right* of the Biafran people to decide their own future. The onus is on those who would deny this to provide arguments capable of persuading us that a long-established Communist principle does not apply here regardless of the apparent facts I have stated.

So much for the *right* of Biafrans to decide in absolutely free and democratic ways whether they wish to secede. The next question is, what should Communists advise them when that right is won? To secede? Or to remain in the Federal state? Should communists fight for secession, or against it? Here is where Zanzolo's second and third postulates are very relevant. Is secession in the concrete situation of today progressive? Or retrogressive? This question must be answered not by reference to the internal regimes of the two states alone, or by trying to assess which is the more democratic or radical, but in reference to a wider frame —

the whole world struggle against imperialism, of which Africa is one of the critical arenas. It is in answer to this that Zanzolo poses what, for him, appears to be the decisive consideration- that Africa needs unity to make an effective advance in the struggle against imperialism; that Biafran secession may set off a chain-reaction of secessionist movements, splintering Africa into non-viable statelings, none of which will be able to survive against imperialist penetration, Clearly, if such secessionist struggles are everywhere let loose, African unity, tenuous though it now may be, will finally perish. This is a formidable argument, and if it is the whole truth, then Biafran claims for what it conceives as 'justice' must be forced to give way before the general African and world interest of unity.

But is this the whole truth? I do not claim to have any ready answer to this question. Like every question confronting Communists, Marxism does not present us with 'instant knowledge', or a set of ready-made truths. The concrete problem has to be studied concretely, every aspect of it taken into account, interpreted in the light of Marxist theory and understanding of social development. I do not wish to suggest that I have made such a study, or am competent in any way to provide the answers. But I do believe that it is vital for the extension of Communist influence in Africa that such a study be made without further delay. Every day that is spent tailing along behind the O. A. U. without deep inner conviction is a day in which our influence as an independent force in Africa declines, and with it the short-term prospects of Africa's advence to socialism.

Without wishing to present an answer to a question which I believe needs serious and deep study, may I then put forward some of the aspects of the situation which need to be considered no less seriousy than Zanzolo's fear of a wave of secessions.

Firstly: that military defeat of Biafra, and military suppression of Biafran secessionism cannot lead to Biafran loyalty to the Federal state of Nigeria, if the ideas of secession are held by a genuine popular national movement. On

the contrary. As we know from our own experience, the ideas and aspirations of genuine and popular nationalism once aroused cannot be extinguished; they can only be driven underground and be forced to find new ways of carrying on the struggle for national aims.

Secondly: that once a popular national movement has developed and fights for national freedom, neither in Biafra nor in Nigeria can the potential of the people be harnessed for the struggle against foreign imperialism. For both sides will be distracted from the crucial front of their fight for nationhood, independence and national integrity – the front against foreign imperialist penetration – and their energies diverted to the distracting internal struggle against the internal enemy – alleged Federal oppressor, or alleged Biafran disruptor.

To this there is one inescapable conclusion. It is this; that once a genuine people's nationalism has developed in Biafra, failure to satisfy its aspirations will perpetuate the present struggle, perhaps in different, non-military terms; it will divert the peoples of the whole country from the struggle against imperialism; it will divide and weaken both sides in the way of a cancer on the national body. Hence, once genuine nationalism has grown up, much as we may regret its appearance, Communists must seek to satisfy its aspirations to prevent the front of our struggle being opened to the imperialist enemy. To quote again from Lenin:

> 'Our five years experience in solving the national question in a country with abundance of nationalities .... fully convinces us that the only correct attitude towards national interrests in such cases is their maximum satisfaction, and the creation of conditions which preclude any possibility of conflict on this score.' (From *The National Liberation Movement in the East.)*

In the circumstances of Colonel Ojukwu's regime, it is not possible for me at least to state categorically that the Biafran movement *is* a genuine or popular national movement. It could well be that it is only a propaganda appearence devised by the ruling Biafran clique for its own purposes. This is precisely the matter that needs study, investigation,

and an assessment made on the spot by organisations with close contact amongst the people of Biafra. But without any dogmatic assertions, may I point to certain straws in the wind which indicate that Biafran nationalism may well have fairly substantial roots amongst the people.

There is the absence of any substantial popular opposition to Colonel Ojukwu's claims of Biafran nationhood which I have noted above. There is also, apparently, little attempt by the people in Biafra to migrate out of it to Federal territory, even though the food, employment conditions are appalling, and the military situation one of fairly steady retreat by Biafran forces; some powerful motives seem to be at work. There is the character of the military effort of Biafra itself, attested to by non-Biafran reporters, in which men go to war armed with rudimentary weapons — clubs, hoes and pangas — more reminiscent of the spirit of a people's war effort than of a mercenary or conscript army. There is the growth of a self-sustained Biafran economic system and market, however primitive and however unequal in the burdens it places on different classes of Biafrans, which indicates something of a homogeneous state in its infancy rather than a temporary military alliance of tribes.

These things do not provide an answer to the whole problem. But they cannot be left out of account. It is not permissible for Marxists to select from all the factors the *one* factor relied on by Zanzolo, and to discount all the rest. Biafran secession must by considered in all its aspects. It must be studied and analysed, not treated by tendentious selection of those facts which bolster a preconceived policy.

But finally, may I repeat. The first question is NOT should Biafra secede. The first question is that Biafra must have the right to decide freely and democratically whether to secede. It is this that Communists must fight for now, even while the next question is being debated, thought over and considered. We can not keep quiet now without losing our integrity and betraying our principles. Let us then make our voices heard on both sides of the war front, crying: 'A plague on both your colonel's regimes. Let the people of Biafra be free to decide.'

TOUSSAINT.

THE BIAFRAN CASE

After reading Sol Dubula in No. 35 (Fourth Quarter. 1968) on the conflict between federal Nigeria and Biafra it was indeed a shock to read the rather ill-informed article of Albert Zanzolo in No. 36 (First Quarter 1969) on the same subject.

All must agree this is by no means a simple problem, and it's not surprising that Marxists-Leninists have different views on the political issues involved. True, we can benefit from Lenin's guidance on the main aspects of the struggle for national liberation and the rights of nations to self-determination, and the need to consider this struggle from the standpoint of the proletarian world revolution.

However, Lenin did not provide us with a ready-made solution for the national problem in Nigeria. Nor could he, for the Nigeria of his life-time is a very different Nigeria today. More than anything else, Lenin would have urged a specific political analysis of the present situation in Nigeria.

What is Nigeria? It's not a single nation, but a territory of over 56 million people, who comprise more than 250 nationalities and tribes (big and small) brought together under British colonial rule, and fashioned to serve the interests of British imperialism.

Its successive constitutional patterns were framed to ensure that the northern feudal emirs and other forces of reaction held the dominant position in the country and the government. In the crisis facing the federal coalition government from 1959 onwards came the armed coup of January 1966, and the ban on all political parties.

Major-General Ironsi (who intervened to take over military control in the armed coup launched by young radical officers, set the aim of achieving a 'unitary state' in place of the old federal system. The setting of this aim (not its achievement) was enough to arouse the hatred and hostility of the feudal rulers to murder Ironsi (who was of Ibo origin) in July 1966.

General Gowon then took over military control. Though not himself a feudal ruler, nor of Hausa or Fulani origin

(but one of the smaller nationalities) he relied from the outset on the northern feudal rulers and the old corrupt political leaders. True, Chief Awolowo was released from prison to become Vice-President of Nigeria, and Joseph Tarku, leader of the Tiv people's opposition to the feudal rulers became one of the twelve 'civilian advisers'. But this was the 'sugar on the pill' to gloss over the reality of political domination by the feudal rulers and other reactionary forces.

In his first broadcast General Gowon condemned the armed coup of January 1966 (most popular among the masses) as a 'national disaster' and a conspiracy of the Ibos. This fomented the infamous massacres of the Ibos in the north, of whom 30,000 were murdered between May and September 1966 and 1,800,000 forced to flee for refuge in the east.

Albert Zanzolo argues this is not enough to establish the 'Ibo as an oppressed group'. Certainly, those massacred do not feel oppressed, for they no longer exist! But what of the 1,800,000 forced to flee for refuge? Would not they and their kinsfolk feel oppressed?

However, this argument about an 'oppressed group' is not the decisive factor, though it would be utter folly and grossly inhuman to under-estimate its impact on the Ibos. The fact is that the Ibos regard themselves as a nation (and did so *before* the massacres) and have always argued for the right of self-determination.

When General Gowon convened the Ad Hoc constitutional conference in September 1966 the eastern region (now Biafra) proposed the formation of autonomous states, linked together within a Nigerian confederation. At first, the northern rulers proposed a complete breakaway (as they have done from time to time in the past 20 years) but during an adjournment were persuaded to reverse this proposal, after pressure from British political advisers. Anyway, no decision was taken because the conference was adjourned indefinitely due to the Ibo massacres in the north.

The next full conference took place in January 1967 at

Aburi (in neighbouring) Ghana attended by General Gowon, all regional military governors (including Major Oiukwu) and their advisers. All the decisions were unanimous, and all of them in the direction of greater autonomy in the regions, with a solemn unanimous pledge to 'renounce the use of force as a means of settling the problems of Nigeria'.

When General Gowon returned to Nigeria his first action was to announce at a press conference his repudiation of these unanimous decisions, on the advice of his 'financial advisers and highly-placed civil servants' — and presumably his British advisers.

This led inevitably to the formation of the state of Biafra (formerly the eastern region) and the war launched against it by General Gowon in July 1967. The war was *not* launched against 'secession' (the favourite phrase of General Gowon and those who support the federal rulers) for *at no time* has Biafra declared for complete secession.

Since Biafra was formed Major Ojukwu has always stressed that its aim was an autonomous state within a Nigerian confederation. Even after all that has happened in this disastrous war Major Ojukwu re-affirmed in his 1969 New Year message that he favoured economic relations with the rest of Nigeria.

True, in the course of the war the line-up on both sides has become extremely complicated. British imperialism backs General Gowon and the federal rulers, and unfortunately so does the Soviet Union — but out of a genuine desire for Nigerian unity. The OAU also backs federal Nigeria, but four African states (Ivory Coast, Gabon, Tanzania, and Zambia) and France to some extent recognise Biafra. Nor is it surprising that Biafra has welcomed support from Portugal, West Germany, and possibly South Africa. So there are conflicting elements lined up on both sides of the conflict.

How far are the masses involved? It's not easy to judge from the reports coming out from Nigeria. Progressive forces and trade unions in Nigeria support the war against Biafra; but it's also clear that the masses in Biafra believe

they are waging a just war of defence. Whatever our view of the character of the war it's not the first time that the masses have been drawn in against their own interests.

In my view Biafra is waging a just war of defence, just as the Abyssinians did 30 years ago against Italian fascism. This doesn't mean that Major Ojukwu is a great liberation fighter any more than General Gowon is an outstanding democratic leader. Both of them are imbued with a bourgeois ideology, and both of them in different degrees are victims of competing political pressures within Nigeria, and of imperialist intervention from outside. What is at stake is *not* their respective political outlooks, but the political character of the war now being waged.

For my part, I'm convinced the Ibos have the right of self-determination (as have other nationalities in Nigeria) and see no reason against them desiring to form an autonomous state within a confederal Nigeria. True, it's bourgeois elements which are in the leadership, but Communists are also concerned with peace between the peoples, even though the form at the moment is that of bourgeois democracy.

One would also welcome the advance of the working class and peasantry into positions of leadership, and to transform it into a real struggle for liberation, and with a socialist perspective. This depends of course on the growth of the political movement both within federal Nigeria and in Biafra.

Meanwhile, it seems to me that the responsibility of the Communist movement, and of the Labour and progressive movement as a whole in Britain, is to wage the utmost opposition to the political strategy of British imperialism, to bring pressure for an unconditional cease-fire as the first step towards joint talks between both sides to reach a peaceful settlement. It's in this direction that Africa has a big responsibility, and the sooner the liberation movements throughout Africa strive in this direction the greater the advance towards complete liberation throughout Africa as a whole.

IDRIS COX

London.

CRITIC OF ZANZOLO

Writing on Nigeria in your last issue Albert Zanzolo pays lip service to the 'complexity' of the Nigerian situation and regrets the paucity of Marxist analysis on our continent. He then proceeds to make an analysis that takes virtually no account of the real situation. He has several rule of thumb texts.

One. That the imperialists favour and encourage secessions, and so, of course, our course is clear. It's too simple an analysis. We're discussing Nigeria and Britain is doing anything but encourage a secession; she is fighting to keep her interests on both sides of the war lines, and to preserve Nigeria as her old ballast on the continent against more radical tendencies. France *is* encouraging a secession in her rival's sphere of influence. So we need a more sophisticated diagnosis of imperialist strategy in Africa. It will have to take into account not only big power rivalries, as well as their mutual interests, but also the role of the huge multi-national oligopolies which increasingly are taking over from the older systems of national colonialisms, and the changed role of capital since decolonisation. To do the opposite of what we detect certain imperialist forces are doing is not a good enough guide to action, on its own.

Rule of thumb number two. That Biafra's secession must be condemned because this is an attempt to dismember the largest state in Africa, one which 'has the potential to become one of the world's great powers if it remains a single state'. And, in almost the same breath, without showing what size has to do with it, Zanzolo argues that we must ask ourselves whether the proletarian revolution will benefit by the break-up of Nigeria. So unity is not only strength for Nigeria, but it is also a greater potential for revolution. How so? The facts are that Nigeria as Africa's largest state was a force for reaction, not least in the OAU. Her very size was thus a negative contribution to Pan-Africanism and social change. There is no evidence that anything that has happened in Nigeria will alter this role. (The belief in some quarters that Nigeria's request for aid, and war weapons, from the Soviet Union is a sign of a new foreign policy of

non-alignment is naive, and it is tragic that the Soviet Union has had to get involved in this war to have this proved in the post-war period, whenever that comes.) As for revolutionary potential being larger inside One Nigeria, it could be argued that a sound reason that the radical and emergent working class movement in Nigeria grew so slowly and was generally so ineffective in national crisis, is that, for one, the combination of three regions dominated by three layers of the political ruling class dwarfed the unions and the socialist forces; and that, for another, class interests were so much more easily diverted or manipulated by ruling groups that fought for power by using ethnic, tribal, religious or community affiliation. 'Unity' here was used to divide the progressive camp.

Perhaps the argument is really that a large and united African state is an essential basis for economic development. Economic growth, perhaps, but not necessarily development at all, as left economists taking a closer look at African economies are finding out. For it is not size essentially but internal social revolution alone that can transform Africa's backwardness and break the grip of foreign interests, and Nigeria shows no signs of this inner revolutionary momentum. Whether either Nigeria or Biafra will find it, is, as Zanzolo correctly says, not material to the argument about the right to self-determination. But Zonzolo uses size and unity to justify support of One Nigeria without adducing any reasons except this larger revolutionary potential. Thus he uses an argument *for* Nigeria which he denounces when used *for* Biafra.

If the chances of being a great power bring no intrinsic advantage in themselves, this is, admittedly, not a reason to support a secession from it. The fact is that secession has happened, and it has to be understood in the very special circumstances that gave rise to it. Zanzolo writes a promising rejection of the too-rigid definition of a nation, which led to the elements being treated as those of a chemical compound; one missing, and no nation. But he does not examine the Biafran claim to self-determination as a nation in this light. To him they do not look oppressed. The fact is,

they *feel* oppressed, and show so by their actions, not least their effort at war against the most formidable odds. It is common cause that the colonial creation of Nigeria combined several potential nations. Whether they become nations depends on such things as common language, territory, culture, economy, etc, but mostly on their common experience. On their pre-July 1966 experience in Nigeria it is true that the Ibo political class was not more singled out for discrimination and oppression than any other group, majority or minority. On the contrary, it connived in various power combinations at the centre to share in political dominance. Their political class, that is. It is the events after the fall of the First Republic and after the installation of the military regimes that changed the situation. The importance of the massacres is that when Ibos were killed for being Ibos, it became more than a struggle between warring sections of Nigeria's ruling groups. It became a struggle for protection of a people. But it is not only a question of the massacres, but of the policies improvised by Nigeria's regime that must be properly understood if one is to appreciate why the Biafrans see no future for themselves in One Nigeria and would rather war to the death for their own state and economy. The 12-State scheme is central, for if represents the compact between the country's ruling groups to divide the spoils without the Eastern Region, or the Ibos and those who go with them. The state scheme had three purposes. The first was to mobilise as many interests as possible for the launching and prosecution of the war against the East. The second was to create a soft underbelly in the East by offering the minority peoples an inducement to throw in their lot with the Federal side. The third was to make the Ibo state unviable by depriving it of oil revenue and access to a port. This, of course, is the detail of coups and counter-coups and the manipulations of political crisis that Zanzolo rejects as being peripheral to the real issues. Perhaps, to understand the issues, we need a closer look at the *actual* structure of these societies, of the real, not the textbook, forces stirring within them.

Given the parasitic character of Africa's lumpen bour-

geosie, the drive to reaction, what has happened to the perspective of 'national democracy'? Is the 'non-capitalist path' an alternative (and what, anyway, *is* the non-capitalist path to development?) It is true that given the existence of the socialist world it might theoretically be possible for African states not to go through capitalism, and the painful process of nation-building that Europe experienced. But we need to take a closer look at the instances where the prospects seemed brightest, and yet failed. Ghana and Mali, for instance. The imperialist counter-offensive is one reason, but what about internal causes? Apart from the existence of a socialist sector there must be, within the newly independent states, the social forces that can muster the strategy and the struggle for this direction. The political crises that lead to pogroms and the Biafran secession — and the political and ideological retreat in the OAU that Zanzolo so vividly describes — arise because the present political leadership in most African states can provide no such leadership or perspective, and socialist forces within them can muster no alternative thrust. We must look at the causes of the failures, judge any secession case on its merits, and examine more acutely the potential for unity and socialism, not only by general Marxist principles but also against the forces on the continent. If we do not do this we will be driven to defend in principle, as Zanzolo does, all existing states, and to condemn any possible secession, and our basic principles will prove not more but less applicable to African realities.

J. GIRODOT

ALGERIA

We have read with interest the account given in THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST No. 36 of the release of political detainees in Algeria, but would like to make some comments;

Firstly, there has not been any kind of amnesty. Although our Party holds the release of these comrades to be a very encouraging step towards the necessary unity of all anti-imperialist forces in Algeria, it must be said that a number of our comrades remain in jail, while even those released are still confined to their residences. The recent action the UGTA (' .de unions) shows that a difficult struggle has still

to be carried on for democracy and workers' rights in Algeria.

Secondly, you refer to Bachir Hadj Ali as the former secretary of the Communist Party, but do not give any explanation about the present situation of the former Communist Party. The Algerian Socialist Vanguard Party (Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste d'Algerie) now unites within its ranks the members of the former C. P. A. and those of the FNL who have been won over to Marxism-Leninism. As you know, our Party has been represented at the various preparatory sessions for the International Communist Conference due to take place in Moscow next May.

With very friendly greetings,

HENRI ALLEG

Paris

AFRO-AMERICANS

In his review of Claude Lightfoot's book, A. Lerumo reiterates an identification with the black people of the U. S. which was a major theme of his earlier article last year. I thought it mistaken then, and I think it mistaken now.

What Lerumo, in his concluding sentence, calls 'the struggle of our people in the United States today', is, apparently, the struggle of American Negroes. Of course, this being a struggle against racism and a part of the broader struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation, it is a struggle with which we identify very strongly because of the nature of our own struggle, and because the struggles are part of an international phenomenon. But in what sense are the American Negroes 'our people', as Lerumo would have it?

If by this Lerumo is demonstrating solidarity with the Negro struggle well and good — but he could express himself more carefully. If, however, he is implying a special link between blacks in Southern Africa and blacks in America, then the purported identification is a false, emotional one which no Marxist should subscribe to. Skin colour, continental connections, slavery in the past and racist oppression in the present — these are the things held in common

by the two groups. Their differences are vast: different histories, cultures, languages, political consciousness, social role, geographical situation etc. There is no *special* link; those who, elsewhere in the world, are also fighting the rades, British workers. But we do not call them 'our people' Vietnamese peasants, Greek patriots, Indonesian comrades, British workers. But we do not call them 'our people' – nor should we. An over-enthusiastic identification with others borders on the presumptuous.

The danger, as I see it, of this false identification which Lerumo makes, is to give credence to race-war type theories by abandoning analysis based on class forces, and yielding to the often attractive, emotionally satisfying but politically incorrect bonds of racial community.

(D. I.)

A. Lerumo replies:

I vigorously repudiate the imputation of racism made in this letter. The fight of the black people of the U.S.A. is not simply a class struggle, but a national one against discrimination and oppression which they suffer because of their (largely) African descent. In this struggle they naturally deserve and enjoy the fullest sympathy of the people of Africa themselves. It is particularly the duty of the independent African States to make use of their independence to see that no people anywhere in the world suffer national humiliation and discrimination because of their African descent.

It was a courageous recognition of this duty which led the African Heads of State meeting at Addis Ababa in May 1963 to express 'deep concern aroused in all African peoples and governments by the measures of racial discrimination against communities of African origin living outside the continent and particularly in the United States of America'.

It is entirely legitimate and proper for the people of any country claiming to be independent to protest and take action to see that people abroad who originated in their own fatherland should not be subjected to ill treatment or discrimination because of their national origin. To act otherwise is inconsistent with national self-respect and human dignity. It is entirely in the same spirit that the Government of India has repeatedly protested since independence at the measures enforced in South Africa against people of Indian origin. I argued this theme at length in my article in THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST 'Our People in the U.S.A.' (No. 33, Second Quarter 1968). To put it very simply, every African patriot whether his skin is black, brown or pink, has the duty to fight discrimination

against Africans anywhere in the world. 'D.I.'s.' argument to the contrary, opposing the international class struggle to the issue of such national solidarity is in my view a caricature of Marxism.

KENYA

I must say I have read with great pleasure the articles in your third and fourth quarter 1968 about Kenya. They show clearly what is taking place there. For this I feel you deserve a lot of thanks and congratulations and I urge you to continue doing so even more effectively. The articles help the progressive simple Kenyan understand his position better and therefore encourage him to fight tirelessly for the right course.

PHILEMON OTIENO OMBOK

Leningrad

BOOK REVIEWS

EROSION OF THE RULE OF LAW IN SOUTH AFRICA.

International Commission of Jurists, Geneva.
Price: 6.75 Sw. Fr.

It has long been the boast of defenders of apartheid that whatever else one might say about South Africa, no-one can dey that its judges are independent and its justice impartially administered. Those who have experienced this justice at the receiving end have been less enthusiastic: court decorum is small compensation for having been roughed up or tortured by the police, held in insanitary lock-ups and charged under immoral and repressive laws. Whatever their role might have been in years when the threat to white domination was less powerful than it is now, the country's judges have today happily allowed themselves to become in effect little more than cultivated clerks dishing out sentences at the behest of the Special Branch. It is not only in what are called security matters that they are so compliant. — recent interpretations by them of the Group Areas legislation and the pass laws show that they are willing to preside without murmur over the ruthless uprooting of hundreds of thousands of citizens and the break-up of tens of thousands of families.

In its latest pamphlet on law in South Africa the International Commission of Jurists states by way of introduction

> 'The overall impression [of the South African judiciary] is that it is as establishment-minded as the Executive,

prepared to adopt an interpretation that will facilitate the Executive's task rather than defend the liberty of the subject and uphold the Rule of Law.'
In simpler words, the watchdogs of the law have become its tame pets.

The International Commission of Jurists is basically a very conservative body. It was recently mixed up in the CIA-money scandal, and it has been criticised for tending to identify the Rule of Law with the protection of institutions associated with private property. Its journals are soberly written and intended to be read by the sort of men who become judges and diplomats and representatives of large companies. Yet the legal scene in South Africa is so disgraceful and the discrepancy between its substance and outward forms so great, that this pamphlet must greatly embarrass the conservatives of the world who wish only to be told that things are really quite good in South Africa and that apartheid is easing up.

The pamphlet begins with a short survey of many recent racial and political laws and shows with thorough documentation how the Courts, and especially the Appeal Court, have strained to interpret the laws in a manner most favourable to the Government and the police. The next section records the various procedural devices which have been enacted to make it increasingly difficult for an accused in a political trial to escape conviction. Then there is a short chapter on recent restrictions on the right of qualified persons to practise law, and finally the first half of the pamphlet concludes with statements by 'Some Dissenting Voices', most of whom appear to be University law lecturers.

Most lay readers will find this first section rather dry in its presentation and difficult to get through because of all the quotations from statutes and references to cases necessary for its purpose. The second section of the pamphlet, however, is an alive personal report which ties all the threads together and shows how the new laws are working out in practice. It consists of a report by Richard A Falk, Professor of International Law at Princeton University,

U.S.A., who attended the closing stages of the trial last year of the South West Africa guerrillas and political leaders. (The trial is officially known as THE STATE v TUHADELENI and others.) Prof. Falk spoke to the defence lawyers, had tea with the Judge and chatted to the prosecutor, but was not allowed to communicate with the accused. Nevertheless he reproduces in full the noble statement made before sentence by Ja Toivo, who, the Professor was told, spoke for all the accused. 'Many South Africans with whom I talked', he writes, 'regard it as a statement of historic importance.'

The strength of Prof. Falk's Report comes from the sharp vision with which he discerned the trial's connection with the general pattern of apartheid and with South African domination of South West Africa. Putting the trial in its full legal and constitutional context, he points out that the South African Government denies black inhabitants of South West Africa any opportunity for personal development or meaningful participation in planning their personal and collective destiny; there are no realistic possibilities to work for peaceful change, and opposition to apartheid in any politically serious way is treated by the South African Government as a crime. He questions the use of the word 'terrorists' to describe persons who are regarded by external liberation groups as 'freedom fighters', and he stresses the extent to which an elaborate system of informers and wide supervision of Africans by means of the pass laws and location regulations keeps Africans in subjection. The administration of these laws appears to him 'virtually to make a criminal class of the entire African population.' He is also convinced that the Special Branch use active and horrible methods of torture.

Of the trial itself, he writes that the procedures seemed normal, the Judge was polite to the Defence and diligent in carrying out his duties, and the Prosecution co-operative in working out compromise arrangements. Yet despite this facade of legal propriety (his words) there were several disturbing features. For one, the accused were referred to by number rather than name and each had a number pinned

to his shirt or jacket. During the trial most of the accused had no sense of what was going on because the interpreter only translated the evidence and not the legal argument or procedural exchanges. In the courtroom were between twelve and fifteen uniformed police carrying sten-guns, while also in attendance were several members of the Special Branch, including those who 'had used brutal means to carry out the interrogations when the prisoners had been confined to prolonged solitary detention.' Most disturbing of all was that the defence team were obliged to operate in a narrow legal framework which accepted the legal, moral and political propriety of punishing anyone who challenged the legitimacy of South African rule. The Judge's emotional language in condemning the accused indicated that any other approach by the defence might have led to even harsher sentences.

Finally, this is how he describes the cruel daily prelude to the trial:

> 'They were crowded into the cage [in the courtyard]. Outside the cage were a large number of uniformed policemen carrying stenguns or holding on to aggressive police dogs. These dogs were trained to bark furiously at the smell or sight of Africans. The prisoners were led through a gauntlet of police and barking dogs from their cage to the courtroom about ten minutes before Mr. Justice Ludorf was due in Court. The lawyers for the defence told that many (if not all) of the defendants were terrified by this daily experience. I stood in the yard and was very frightened by the generally menacing quality of the scene.'

Backed up by the convincing detail of the first section of the book, Professors Falk's report is one of the most compelling indictments of the administration of justice in South Africa ever to have been written.

R. GREEN

18th CENTURY AFRICAN PHILOSOPHER

Antonius Guilielmus Amo Afer: Collected Works, Halle-Wittenberg, G.D.R.

Antonius Guilielmus Amo Afer from Axim in Ghana, was a student Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Law at the Universities of Halle, Wittenberg and Jena in Germany. A major work about him has now been issued by the Martin Luther University in Halle (Wittenberg). His works have been selected and collected by Burchard Brentjes, on behalf of the University and the work has been edited and produced by Burchardt Thaler and prefaced with a forward by the Rector of the University, Professor F. Wolf.

The publication contains 306 illustrations together with reprints of documents, manuscripts and other publications written by and about the first African philosopher studying and teaching at a modern university in the early 18th century.

The originals were published and are reprinted in Latin, but an additional volume provides English translations of his works.

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His ideology was influenced by the materialist, although

mechanical, philosophy of John Locke and Boerhave's theory of medicine. As a result of the suppression of materialism and the early Enlightenment by Church and State, he lost his lectureship. In 1747 he became a victim of racialist attacks and returned home. He was forced to live in a fort of the Dutch slave-trading East India Company because his brother, living as a slave in Surinam, was alleged to have taken part in the big liberation wars in this Dutch colony.

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